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# *SCOPUS*

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*Edited by*

GRAEME BACKHURST

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# SCOPUS

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Tables, which should be numbered, *should appear in the typescript, NOT grouped on separate sheets at the end*. Metric units should be used. If non-metric units were used in the original observation or experiment, the approximate metric equivalent should be given in brackets.

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*Continued inside back cover*

# SCOPUS



## MOVEMENTS OF PALAEARCTIC RAPTORS IN THE ETHIOPIAN RIFT VALLEY

Alan Vittery

Much information has been published in recent years on raptor migration at the Bosphorus, in northeastern Turkey, at Elat, the Gulf of Suez and elsewhere in the Near and Middle East. Less is known about the movements of the large proportion of these birds which winter in tropical or southern Africa.

From June 1974 until June 1975 (except for November and December 1974) I was based in Addis Ababa and was able to make fairly frequent visits to the Rift Valley which runs in a southwest-northeast direction from the Kenya border in the south to the Danakil Desert in the north, passing within 60 km of the Ethiopian capital at Mojo, on the Awash River.

Raptor movements were noted in autumn 1974 and spring 1975 from the west shore of Lake Langano. These observations are supplemented by records from the nearby Lakes Shalla, Abiata and Zwai, the Koka Dam area near Mojo, the Awash National Park, the environs of Addis Ababa and nearby localities on the Western Highlands, and from the inter-linking road system (Fig. 1).

The only published reports of raptor movements on any scale in the area come from Eritrea, to the north, where K.D. Smith (1960) reported that "Eagles in thousands, together with (Black) Kites, Buzzards and Lesser Kestrels pass regularly over the plateau in November, although Kites also appear earlier in September." Although these concentrations coincided with the arrival of desert locusts *Schistocerca gregaria* in the area, Smith considered that the raptor passage was true migration and not merely related to the abundant food supply. Urban & Brown (1971) described several of the Palaearctic raptors as common passage migrants but did not give any indication of the routes used.

### MIGRATION AT LAKE LANGANO

Lake Langano lies at 7.35°N, 38.45°E and is the easternmost of a group of three lakes at an altitude of about 1580 m, 160 km due south of Addis Ababa. Observations were possible on eight dates in September (from 14th) and four in October (24th - 27th inclusive) in 1974 and on seven dates in March/April 1975. They were made from the top of a low (20 m) cliff fringing the western shore of the lake which commanded an unbroken view over the plain to the north

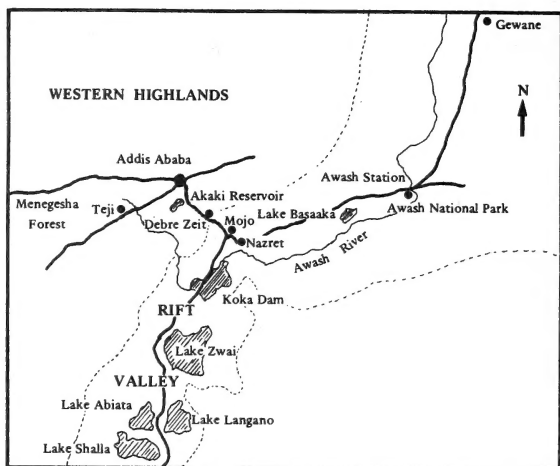


Fig. 1. Map of the Rift Valley and Western Highlands, Ethiopia

and the acacia woodland to the west and south. In autumn raptors would gain height over the plain before filing south over the narrow land bridge between Lakes Langanu and Abiata.

Black Kites *Milvus migrans* and Steppe Buzzards *Buteo buteo vulpinus* accounted for almost 98 per cent of all Palaearctic raptors recorded in autumn (assuming the Black Kites were all of the race *migrans* - see Systematic List). Migration was less concentrated in spring but involved a greater variety of species. Most observed movement occurred in the late morning with much smaller numbers after midday, although the pattern was reversed on 29 September with the second largest of all recorded movements taking place in mid-afternoon after early morning rain. It was difficult to correlate movement with weather patterns. The largest movements occurred when there was a light headwind, but winds from the southwest quarter seemed to prevail in autumn and there was often little movement when conditions seemed to be ideal. This suggests that migration this far south along the route is very dependent on conditions further north. Passage was noted on both bright and overcast days. Rain becomes more infrequent as the autumn progresses and is unusual in spring.

The narrow land bridge between Lakes Langanu and Abiata undoubtedly funnels birds of prey moving on a roughly north/south axis along the Rift Valley, but no observations were possible from the sides of the Rift to ascertain what proportion of raptors used this route. An indication of the relative importance of the Langanu route may be the fact that it was also used as a flight line by unusually large numbers of the 'resident' raptors - mainly vultures and Tawny Eagles *Aquila rapax* - and also by migrating Marabous *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* and Abdim's Storks *Ciconia abdimii* in April 1975.

A summary of movement at Lake Langanu in autumn 1974 is given in Table 1 while spring 1975 movement is in Table 2.



TABLE 1  
Autumn movements at Lake Langano in 1974

Date	S e p t e m b e r								Oct
	14	15	21	22	26	27	28	29	27
Time	pm	11:30 13:00	pm	11:00 13:00	09:45 13:00	10:30 13:00	11:10 15:40	10:15 14:00	09:30 12:30
<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	-	-	1	5	-	-	4	10	-
<i>Milvus migrans</i>	2	38	5	600+	4	98	234	40	3
<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2E
<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Buteo b. vulpinus</i>	-	1	-	180	1	106	192	35	4
<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	-	-	1	1	1	2	2	2	-
<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	3	1
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

All birds were moving S or SW unless stated. No movement was noted on 24, 25 or 26 October

TABLE 2  
Spring movements at Lake Langano in 1975

Date	M a r c h			A p r i l			
	16	17	19	12	13	26	27
Time	08:50 12:30	09:00 12:00	am	09:30 10:30	09:50 11:10	10:00 12:15	09:15 11:15
<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Milvus migrans</i>	18	6	5	2	12	-	-
<i>Circus macrourus</i>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Circus pygargus</i>	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>	-	2	-	?1	-	-	-
<i>Buteo b. vulpinus</i>	8	1	-	-	11	1	1
<i>Aquila pomarina</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1W	-
<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>	15	8	-	2	-	-	-
<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Falco naumanni</i>	-	5	-	-	?1	-	-
<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1	-

All birds were moving N or NW unless stated

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

The order and scientific nomenclature follow Voous (1973) except that the Steppe Eagle is accorded specific status under the name *Aquila nipalensis*.

*Pernis apivorus* Honey Buzzard

In September 1974 a total of 20 flew south at Lake Langano; on 29th, of the ten recorded, five were together. All were of the typical form and all passed through in the late morning or early afternoon. There were only three records of single birds in spring 1975: at Addis Ababa on 9 and 11 March (both flying north) and at Lake Langano on 16 March (flying northwest).

Urban & Brown (1971) knew of no recent occurrences of this species in the country and questioned the validity of earlier records.

*Milvus migrans* Black Kite

The race *parasitus* is resident in central and southern Ethiopia while *aegyptius* largely replaces it in the northeast. The numbers of local Black Kites are supplemented by wintering *migrans* from September to May. Many *migrans* winter further south in Africa and undoubtedly account for the vast majority of the birds passing through the Langano area. Not all migrants were positively identified as *migrans* and the possibility of local movements of *parasitus* and/or *aegyptius* must also be borne in mind, although rains-associated movements of these races would be expected to take place in May/June and November/December.

In autumn 1974, a total of 1024 flew south at Lake Langano on nine dates between 14 and 29 September with maxima of 600 in two hours (11:00 - 13:00) on 22nd and 234 on 28th, 215 of which passed through in 25 minutes from 15:15. Passage seemed to have virtually stopped by late October since, during the period 24th - 27th the only evidence of movement was of three flying south during a two-hour watch on 27th. In spring 1975 a total of 29 flew north between 16 and 19 March and then 14 on 12-13 April.

Urban & Brown (1971) were uncertain about the relative status of the three races in Ethiopia. Smith (1957, 1960) regarded *migrans* as a common migrant in Eritrea in both spring and autumn, when passage was noted in both September and November. Ebbels (1973) reported large movements further south in the Rift Valley in Tanzania in October.

*Neophron percnopterus* Egyptian Vulture

A breeding resident in the Rift Valley. Palaearctic migrants would be impossible to distinguish from local birds, but there was no discernible increase in numbers in autumn 1974 or spring 1975. The only possible evidence of migration was of two adults flying south over Lake Langano on 22 September 1974.

*Gyps fulvus* Griffon Vulture

Two adults circled high over Lake Langano on 27 October 1974 before drifting off to the east.

Although Urban & Brown (1971) described the species as an uncommon passage migrant in the Western Highlands and northeast Ethiopia, Moreau (1972) pointed out that Sudanese and not Palaearctic breeding birds are most likely to be involved. The above record nevertheless represents the most southerly occurrence in the Rift Valley.

*Circetus gallicus* Short-toed Eagle

Only two records of single birds in autumn 1974: at Koka on 20 October and Lake Langano on 25 October. One at Lake Langano on 20 January 1975 was the only winter record. In spring 1975 one was seen south of Koka on 13 April and a late bird was over Addis Ababa on 6 June.

Urban & Brown (1971) regarded the species as an uncommon passage migrant

from October to March. The last of the above records suggests that, as in West Africa, some birds remain in the tropics during the summer.

*Circus aeruginosus* Marsh Harrier

Small numbers were seen at suitable localities in the Highlands and the Rift Valley between early October 1974 and late March 1975, but there was no evidence of passage through the Lake Langano area.

*Circus macrourus* Pallid Harrier

In autumn 1974 this species was positively identified at Lake Langano on 24, 25 and 27 October (one or two males and one female). In 1975, males were seen at several localities in January, February and March. For discussion and records of unidentified 'ringtails' see *Circus macrourus/pygargus* below.

*Circus pygargus* Montagu's Harrier

In 1974 two males were seen south of Mojo on 24 October. In 1975 three single males were seen in January and there were several near Teji, southwest of Addis Ababa, on 1 and 2 March. One over Addis on 10 March was an obvious migrant, reflecting a marked passage in the Rift Valley where 14 *Circus* spp. south of Mojo on 15 March included three male Montagu's. Two males flew north at Lake Langano on 16 March, there was one at Akaki Reservoir on 23 March and two in the Awash National Park on 28 March.

*Circus macrourus/pygargus* Pallid/Montagu's Harrier

In autumn 1974 'ringtail' harriers were recorded in small numbers (up to four) from 25 September to 27 October. Numbers of both species were higher in spring 1975, with a combined total of 14 south of Mojo on 15 March being the highest count. It was last recorded on 13 April.

Urban & Brown (1971) regarded both species as fairly common passage migrants between October and March, but uncommon outside this period. There seemed to be no appreciable difference in their relative abundance.

*Accipiter nisus* Eurasian Sparrowhawk

One circled high over Lake Langano before moving off to the south on 26 September 1974 and one, of this species or the next, flew north there on 12 April 1975.

Small numbers of the Eurasian Sparrowhawk are known to reach East Africa in winter (Britton 1980) but Urban & Brown (1971) were uncertain about its status in Ethiopia.

*Accipiter brevipes* Levant Sparrowhawk

Two males flew north over Lake Langano on 17 March 1975; see also a possible record under *A. nisus*.

The status of the species in Ethiopia is obscure, but it is likely that the main wintering areas in Africa are well to the west of the Rift Valley. Flocks of migrating *Accipiter* spp. were seen in the Nile Valley in northern Sudan in September (Christensen 1960).

*Buteo buteo* Common Buzzard

All the birds seen showed the characteristics of the Steppe Buzzard *B. b. vulpinus*. In September 1974 a total of 515 flew south at Lake Langano on six dates between 15th and 29th with maxima of 180 on 22nd and 192 on 28th. Singles were seen over Addis Ababa on 3 and 15 October and four flew south at Lake Langano on 27 October. In spring 1975, one was seen west of Addis on 9 March while at Lake Langano a total of nine flew north on 16 and 17 March, 11 flew north on 13 April and singles were seen flying in the same direction there on 26 and 27 April. The species was often associated with other raptors, mainly Black Kites. The most concentrated passage was of 174 in 25 minutes from 15:15 on 28 September (cf. Black Kite). Otherwise most passed in the

late morning, although a watch beginning at 10:25 on 29 September caught the tail-end of a movement of unknown dimensions.

The numbers passing through the Lake Langano area represent only a small fraction of the birds wintering in eastern and southern Africa and it seems likely that the majority follow the Nile route further west. Moreau (1972) speculated that, in view of the numbers of *vulpinus* taken in Arabia an important passage across the Bab el Mandeb is probable. Smith (1960) referred to passage across the Eritrean plateau in November but, as wintering populations are well established in southern Africa by this time, these birds may stay in the northern tropics.

*Buteo rufinus* Long-legged Buzzard

The only record was of one south of Mojo on 15 March 1975.

Brown et al. (1982) show the main wintering areas in eastern Africa as in Sudan and Ethiopia but there seem to be few definitive records and Urban & Brown (1971) considered the species to be uncommon in Ethiopia.

*Aquila pomarina* Lesser Spotted Eagle

None seen in autumn at Lake Langano but two spring records in 1975: an immature at Koka Dam on 19 March and an adult flying west at Lake Langano on 26 April.

Smith (1960) saw thousands of "Spotted Eagles" (*A. pomarina/clanga*) in Eritrea in November and Urban & Brown (1971) referred to birds thought to have been of this species migrating in the lower Omo valley in southwest Ethiopia, presumably in autumn.

*Aquila clanga* Greater Spotted Eagle

None was seen at Lake Langano. The only records were of single immatures north of Zwai on 18 January and near Nazret on 28 March 1975.

Urban & Brown (1971) regarded the species as a "frequent to common passage migrant" in the Western Highlands but admitted that its status was obscured by the possibility of confusion with other similar species.

*Aquila nipalensis* Steppe Eagle

None was identified at Lake Langano in autumn 1974. The main arrival was presumably in November (when I was absent from the country) since it was not uncommon on my return in January in parties of up to six in both the Western Highlands and the Rift Valley. An adult was seen displaying at Koka Dam on 23 February 1975. In spring 1975 at Lake Langano, a total of 23 flew north on 16 and 17 March. Thereafter, it was seen on only four occasions: over Addis Ababa on 21 March, in the Awash National Park on 30 March, two at Lake Langano on 12 April (eight eagles flying north there on the next day were considered to have been the 'resident' race of the Tawny Eagle *A. rapax raptor*) and a late bird near Gewane on 5 May.

Urban & Brown (1971) considered the species to be a common passage migrant between October and April. As many winter further south in East Africa, there must be a considerable movement through Ethiopia in autumn, possibly along the western river systems. Moreau (1972) suspected that some must enter Africa via southwest Arabia (Bab el Mandeb) but there is still no firm evidence to support this.

*Aquila heliaca* Imperial Eagle

Three records of single birds: an immature at Lake Langano on 25 October 1974 (which was photographed), an adult at Lake Shalla on 22 January 1975 and an immature flying north at Lake Langano on 16 March 1975.

The species is known to occur sparingly in winter in northeastern Africa, although Urban & Brown (1971) knew of no recent records from Ethiopia.

*Hieraetus pennatus* Booted Eagle

At Lake Langano in September 1974 a total of nine flew south (seven adults, one sub-adult and one immature) on six dates between 21st and 29th. In spring 1975 adults flew north there on 16 March and over Addis Ababa on 19 April.

Urban & Brown (1971) described the species as a passage migrant of uncertain status. It is known to winter widely but thinly throughout eastern and southern Africa.

*Pandion haliaetus* Osprey

Rather surprisingly there were only four records: in autumn 1974 single birds were seen at Lake Basaaka on 8 September and Lake Langano on 15 September. In spring 1975 there were singles at Lake Basaaka on 30 March and Lake Shalla on 12 April.

The species was described as a resident in the Dahlak Islands in the Red Sea by Urban & Brown (1971). Ash (1981) gave a ringing recovery of a Finnish bird further south in Tigre.

*Falco naumanni* Lesser Kestrel

None was seen at Lake Langano in autumn 1974. In 1975 the first to be positively identified were two east of Debre Zeit on 18 January, followed by a marked passage through the Western Highlands and Rift Valley lasting until 5 May. Maxima were 20+ at Debre Zeit on 9 February, 100+ at Teji on 2 March, 30 at Debre Zeit on 19 March and at Akaki Reservoir on 23 March, 50+ in the Awash National Park between 28 and 30 March and 30 south of Mojo on 13 April. At Lake Langano five flew north on 17 March.

Urban & Brown (1971) described the species as a "common to abundant passage migrant" from October to May. Smith (1957, 1960) noted movement through Eritrea in October and November and it is probable that the main arrivals in the Addis Ababa area and the Rift Valley occurred during my absence in November. The above records nevertheless support the conclusions of Cramp & Simmons (1980) that the spring passage is more conspicuous and protracted, lasting from January until May.

*Falco tinnunculus* Kestrel

Migrants were difficult to separate from the resident race *rufescens*, although the species was undoubtedly commoner from September to March in the Western Highlands and the Rift Valley. There was no evidence of movement at Lake Langano, but a male of the distinctive Egyptian race *rupicolaeformis* flew north at Lake Abiata on 18 March 1975. This race is known to straggle to northeastern Africa (Moreau 1972) but there are no published records from Ethiopia.

Urban & Brown (1971) regarded the nominate race as a "common to abundant passage migrant, September - April."

*Falco vespertinus* Red-footed Falcon

Only one record, of a male which flew north at Lake Langano on 26 April 1975.

There are few records of this species in East Africa (Britton 1980). Urban & Brown (1971) listed it as a passage migrant of uncertain status in Western Ethiopia (September/October and March/April) and referred to migration in association with Kestrels. It seems probable that the main migration route lies well to the west of the Rift Valley.

*Falco subbuteo* Hobby

Recorded in autumn and spring but only at Lake Langano (see Tables 1 and 2).

Urban & Brown (1971) regarded the species as a locally abundant passage migrant (October and March/April), with the spring movement mainly affecting eastern Ethiopia.

*Falco peregrinus* Peregrine Falcon

In September 1974 singles were seen near Menegesha on 11th and at Lake Langanu (flying south) on 21st. Both were considered to be of the Palaearctic race *calidus*.

Urban & Brown (1971) regarded the Palaearctic nominate race as an uncommon passage migrant between October and March; they did not record *calidus* but noted that it might occur.

*Falco* spp.

Five other species of migratory falcons are listed by Urban & Brown (1971). The Eastern Red-footed Falcon *F. amurensis* was considered by them to be a possible passage migrant in the northeast of the country. Eleonora's Falcon *F. eleonorae* and the Sooty Falcon *F. concolor* seem to be exclusively coastal in this part of Africa. The Saker Falcon *F. cherrug* is described as a frequent visitor, mainly in wetland areas, and might therefore be expected to occur at the Rift Valley lakes in winter. Finally, these authors record the Barbary Falcon *F. peregrinoides* as an uncommon Palaearctic migrant.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the limited observations at Lake Langanu, it is reasonable to assume that well in excess of 10 000 Palaearctic raptors pass south along this part of the Rift Valley in September and October, the vast majority of which are Black Kites and Steppe Buzzards. Numbers would appear to be much smaller in spring, suggesting that an alternative route is used. Even the autumn Kite and Buzzard numbers are only a small fraction of the migrants reaching eastern and southern Africa and the absence or scarcity of several other species wintering south of Ethiopia indicates that most birds use other routes, of which the Nile and the river systems of Western Ethiopia are the most obvious.

It is likely that many of the birds of prey at Lake Langanu in autumn have either travelled south from Eritrea, possibly following the eastern escarpments of the Western Highlands, or have entered Ethiopia in the northeast after crossing the Straits of Bab el Mandeb, adding weight to the few published observations (e.g. Tuck 1965) supporting the theory that numbers of large raptors cross into Africa from southwest Arabia.

Comparative studies from the sides of the Rift Valley are necessary to determine more accurately the volume of passage, but random observations by the author and other observers in recent years have not given any indication of the presence of another major route in this part of Ethiopia.

## SUMMARY

Observations in autumn 1974 and spring 1975 revealed a passage of Palaearctic raptors over the land bridge between Lakes Langanu and Abiata. The species involved in autumn were mainly Black Kites and Steppe Buzzards. Spring passage was less concentrated but involved a greater variety of species. Several species, for which there are no previous or recent Ethiopian records, were seen.

The Lake Langanu observations are supplemented by data from other localities in the Rift Valley and the adjacent Western Highlands, and are related to published information on Ethiopia and neighbouring countries.

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#### CORRECTION

In the list of contents on the back cover of *Scopus* 6 (4), December 1982,  
S.W. Sikombe's name was omitted as co-author (with D.C. Moyer) of the Short  
Communication 'A breeding record of the White-rumped Babbler *Turdoides leuco-*  
*pygius* from Tanzania'; we are sorry about this mistake.

Ed.

## ABERRANTLY PLUMAGED BARBETS

L.L. Short, J.F.M. Horne &amp; J-P. Vande weghe

In the course of our studies (LLS, JFMH) of African barbets (Capitonidae) we have observed several aberrantly plumaged individuals of two species. This led to a review of literature on such aberrant barbets, especially the report on the Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus* by Salomonsen (1934). We note our observations, and point out various other reported individuals in aberrant plumages because these seem to occur with some frequency in the family, and because colour replacement is evident between members of various species pairs and within species groups (e.g. differences between the White-headed and Chaplin's Barbets *Lybius leucocephalus* and *L. chaplini*, between the Red-faced and Black-billed Barbets *L. rubrifacies* and *L. guifsobalito*, between the Red and Yellow and Yellow-breasted Barbets *Trachyphonus erythrocephalus* and *T. margaritatus*, and between the Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird and the Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* and *P. pusillus*). Tendencies for intra-specific colour variations may be related to the speciation process in that the genetics of the observed variation could be similar to that involved in speciation affecting the same traits.

## OBSERVATIONS

While studying Red-faced Barbets in the Lake Birengero region, southern Akagera National Park, eastern Rwanda on 3 January 1982, we encountered a largely white barbet accompanying one, and at times up to four Red-faced Barbets in typical plumage (this is essentially black with yellow edges on the primaries and secondaries and a red area from the forecrown to the forehead, around the eyes and over the forethroat and chin). The habitat in which we found the bird was hill-slope *Combretum-Terminalia* open woodland west of Lake Birengero. The white barbet interacted within a group of two to five birds, and in observations during parts of three days between 3 and 7 January it associated closely with one Red-faced Barbet in particular. Using playback of the duets of this species (Short & Horne MS) we stimulated the five-bird group so that two birds duetted, presumably the primary pair, and several times while the other three members of the group were elsewhere, we were able to elicit duets by the white bird and its close associate (these duets were recorded on tape by JFMH). Vocally the white bird was typical of *rubrifacies*, and hence there is no doubt that it represents that species, although we had thoughts of it possibly being *Lybius chaplini* during our initial encounter with it.

We carefully noted the plumage of the white barbet and, on 3 January, it was sketched by J-PV (Fig. 1). Based upon our collective field notes, taped comments and the sketch, we can describe the bird as follows: bill pale (creamy) yellowish; 'face', i.e. forehead to mid-crown, forethroat, chin, area around eyes, lores and anterior moustachial region, red as in typical *rubrifacies*; rest of head, upperparts, underparts, wing coverts and tail clear white except for the outer two or so tail feathers that were black, and the primaries and secondaries, which were black, edged with pale yellow. The bill was also paler than in typical *rubrifacies*. Because of the melanin evident in its wings and tail, and the presence of the presumably lipochromic pigments red and yellow, we consider the bird to have been a largely albinistic individual of *L. rubrifacies*. To our knowledge no such aberrantly plumaged individual of this species has been mentioned in the literature.

From 17 to 20 September 1980 LLS and JFMH studied tinkerbirds (*Pogoniulus chrysoconus*) at about 1300 m, 28 km northwest of Kericho, western Kenya in

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#### CORRECTION

In the list of contents on the back cover of *Scopus* 6 (4), December 1982, S.W. Sikombe's name was omitted as co-author (with D.C. Moyer) of the Short Communication 'A breeding record of the White-rumped Babbler *Turdoides leucopygius* from Tanzania'; we are sorry about this mistake.

Ed.

## ABERRANTLY PLUMAGED BARBETS

L.L. Short, J.F.M. Horne &amp; J-P. Vande weghe

In the course of our studies (LLS, JFMH) of African barbets (Capitonidae) we have observed several aberrantly plumaged individuals of two species. This led to a review of literature on such aberrant barbets, especially the report on the Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus* by Salomonsen (1934). We note our observations, and point out various other reported individuals in aberrant plumages because these seem to occur with some frequency in the family, and because colour replacement is evident between members of various species pairs and within species groups (e.g. differences between the White-headed and Chaplin's Barbets *Lybius leucocephalus* and *L. chaplini*, between the Red-faced and Black-billed Barbets *L. rubrifacies* and *L. guifsobalito*, between the Red and Yellow and Yellow-breasted Barbets *Trachyphonus erythrocephalus* and *T. margaritatus*, and between the Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird and the Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* and *P. pusillus*). Tendencies for intra-specific colour variations may be related to the speciation process in that the genetics of the observed variation could be similar to that involved in speciation affecting the same traits.

## OBSERVATIONS

While studying Red-faced Barbets in the Lake Birengero region, southern Akagera National Park, eastern Rwanda on 3 January 1982, we encountered a largely white barbet accompanying one, and at times up to four Red-faced Barbets in typical plumage (this is essentially black with yellow edges on the primaries and secondaries and a red area from the forehead to the forehead, around the eyes and over the forethroat and chin). The habitat in which we found the bird was hill-slope *Combretum-Terminalia* open woodland west of Lake Birengero. The white barbet interacted within a group of two to five birds, and in observations during parts of three days between 3 and 7 January it associated closely with one Red-faced Barbet in particular. Using playback of the duets of this species (Short & Horne MS) we stimulated the five-bird group so that two birds duetted, presumably the primary pair, and several times while the other three members of the group were elsewhere, we were able to elicit duets by the white bird and its close associate (these duets were recorded on tape by JFMH). Vocally the white bird was typical of *rubrifacies*, and hence there is no doubt that it represents that species, although we had thoughts of it possibly being *Lybius chaplini* during our initial encounter with it.

We carefully noted the plumage of the white barbet and, on 3 January, it was sketched by J-PV (Fig. 1). Based upon our collective field notes, taped comments and the sketch, we can describe the bird as follows: bill pale (creamy) yellowish; 'face', i.e. forehead to mid-crown, forethroat, chin, area around eyes, lores and anterior moustachial region, red as in typical *rubrifacies*; rest of head, upperparts, underparts, wing coverts and tail clear white except for the outer two or so tail feathers that were black, and the primaries and secondaries, which were black, edged with pale yellow. The bill was also paler than in typical *rubrifacies*. Because of the melanin evident in its wings and tail, and the presence of the presumably lipochromic pigments red and yellow, we consider the bird to have been a largely albinistic individual of *L. rubrifacies*. To our knowledge no such aberrantly plumaged individual of this species has been mentioned in the literature.

From 17 to 20 September 1980 LLS and JFMH studied tinkerbirds (*Pogoniulus chrysoconus*) at about 1300 m, 28 km northwest of Kericho, western Kenya in



Fig. 1. Aberrantly plumaged White-headed Barbet

general pattern) that we could ascribe to *pusillus*. Unfortunately we were unable to collect the bird. Adjacent *chrysoconus* collected (three birds) were gold-to yellow-fronted. We could find no *P. pusillus* in a roadside search within 10 km of that site, although *chrysoconus* was common to abundant. We surmise that the individual seen, which reacted strongly to, and was dominant on its 'territory' to adjacent *chrysoconus*, was a red-fronted mutant, or otherwise aberrant *P. chrysoconus*.

We note that in southern Africa, where *P. chrysoconus* and *P. pusillus* are also parapatric, there exists near the range of *pusillus* a population of *chrysoconus* that tends to be orange-fronted. Ross (1970) showed that these orange-fronted (Transvaal) tinkerbirds resemble *chrysoconus*, and show no other traits indicating *pusillus* influence. He concluded (Ross 1970: 203) that the orange-fronted birds are variant individuals of *P. chrysoconus*. In view of the vocal as well as morphological similarity between these two tinkerbirds, it is interesting that the aberrantly plumaged (red- or orange-fronted) birds come from areas close to the range of red-fronted *P. pusillus*.

#### OTHER ABERRANTLY PLUMAGED BARBETS

Within *Lybius*, the Ethiopian Banded Barbet *L. undatus leucogenys* varies greatly. Individuals of this subspecies may have white supercilia without other head markings, or have white blotches on an otherwise black throat, white marks on the ear coverts, the sides of the neck and the hind neck. In some birds with mixed throat colour the pale patches are white but others

a degraded patch of acacia woodland amid cultivation near the main Kericho-Kisumu road. Here we found a population of variably yellow-to gold-fronted Yellow-fronted Tinkerbirds. We quickly became aware that one of about half a dozen of the tinkerbirds about us had a red, not gold, orange or yellow front. We thought the bird might be a representative of *P. pusillus*, very similar to and parapatric with, *P. chrysoconus*, with which it forms a superspecies (to attract *chrysoconus* we played back various calls of *pusillus* only, always getting a response, just as in Malawi in 1980 we had *chrysoconus* reacting to playback of Kenyan *pusillus*, and in central and southern Kenya we have had *pusillus* respond to playback of *chrysoconus* as if their calls were of the same species). Its vocalizations seemed generally typical of *chrysoconus* (voice recorded by JFMH), although the various calls of the two are so similar as to make distinction difficult. Careful observations showed no other features (colour of underparts or

have the white mixed with red or orange. Of those *leucogenys* showing white or red on the head, no two birds are alike. Traylor (1962) described a moulting specimen of *leucogenys* in which the yellow of the underparts, flight feathers of the wing, rump and uppertail coverts was replaced by orange in the new but not the old plumage. Macdonald (1938) suggested how great is the variation in *leucogenys* by describing its throat as black to white. Even in black-throated *L. u. undatus* some individuals exhibit red feathers amid the black throat feathers (pers. obs.).

Steyn & Densham (1975: 51) reported a Black-collared Barbet *L. torquatus* in Mkuzi Game Reserve, South Africa, having its head "lime yellow" instead of the normal red, a presumed case of xanthocroism. There is much variation in the tone of red (orange-red, red-orange) in specimens of *torquatus* that we have examined, some birds even showing yellowish (the related, red-headed *L. guif-sobalito* shows the same variation towards orange and even yellow (pers. obs.)). Salomonsen (1934) treated the forms *zombae* and '*albonotatus*' of *L. torquatus*; the former has the red of its head replaced by black bearing white or yellow-white spots, and the latter shows a partial white supercilium. It is known (Short & Horne, in press) that *zombae* (including *albigularis*) is a variable but valid race of *L. torquatus*, the red of its head being replaced by black with the spots just mentioned. Williams (1966) described a race *nampunju* from southern Tanzania; it seems to represent an extreme, white-throated variant of *L. torquatus zombae*.

Occasional specimens of *Lybius minor*, the Black-backed Barbet, show indications of partial albinism in white marks on the plumage (pers. obs.). A female Double-toothed Barbet *L. bidentatus* from Ntandi, Uganda, in the Cornell University collection is aberrant in having its upper back half white (instead of all black) and one white feather bears an orange spot. Most specimens of the Brown-breasted Barbet *L. melanopterus* bear a white moustachial mark usually masked by the red of the surrounding feathers. A specimen (No. 108953) of Vieillot's Barbet *L. vieilloti* in the Leningrad Zoological Museum has the red of the head entirely replaced by buffy yellow and its breast spots are yellowish rather than red; peculiarly, the areas normally yellow in *vieillototi* have the yellow suppressed in this bird, that is, its belly lacks yellow, as do the edges of the primaries and secondaries, and the yellow rump is very pale. The melanins are unaffected in this specimen, which can be considered xanthocroic with some reduction of lipochrome pigments. Also partly xanthocroic is an unsexed Gambian Boucard specimen of *vieillototi* in the Cornell University collection, generally typical of that species; it is pale yellow-orange in the malar area, under the eye and across the centre of its crown.

In the collection of the American Museum of Natural History is a male Yellow-breasted Barbet *Trachyphonus margaritatus* (No. 454080) obtained by G.W. Bury or his collectors in the Wagar Mountains of Somalia. This bird is fully albino, lacking all melanins; it is entirely white except as follows:

1. yellow forehead, sides of crown, supercilia, crest, and rear of the neck (where shaft streaks are orange);
2. bright yellow nape, ear coverts (except for a white patch over the ear openings), 'face', chin, throat and breast, with orange shaft streaks on the sides of the mid-breast;
3. pale red feather tips at the border of the breast and belly;
4. very pale yellow tips of the white belly to undertail coverts;
5. a yellow-cream tinge to the white tail which is unlike the pure white wings and most of the back;
6. bright red uppertail coverts;
7. a few pale yellow tips on the lower back;
8. rump feathers broadly yellow-tipped on white.



Thus, the lipochrome pigments appear in this specimen as red and yellow where these normally occur in *margaritatus*, the normally melanistic parts of the plumage being white.

## DISCUSSION

These tendencies towards colour aberration described are, in our experience, unusual in avian families. Of course albinism, melanism and xanthochroism occur in most if not all groups of birds, but instances of replacement patterning, the addition of presumed lipochrome pigments to melanistic pigmented or unpigmented (white) areas, and partial albinism in a group having white-headed, white-bodied and white facially-striped species are of significance. Speciation can involve mutations relating to these patterns, and probably has done so, e.g., in the evolution of the *Tricholaema diademata* complex, *T. hirsuta*, *T. melanocephala* (*flavibuccalis*), *Stactolaema olivacea* (*woodwardi*), *Lybius leucocephalus*, *L. chaplini* and probably *L. vieilloti*. White and melanistic face patterning and the presence or absence of a white scapular bar are traits by which the hybridizing *L. minor minor* and *L. minor macclounii* differ (Short 1982).

Replacement of red by yellow, or vice versa is apt to be genetically very simply controlled, yet differences involving these colours appear important between yellow-fronted *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* and red-fronted *P. pusillus*, and between yellow-cheeked *Trachyphonus margaritatus* and red-cheeked *T. erythrocephalus* (both *Trachyphonus* have a small white ear patch, obscured by the pale yellow colour of the ear coverts in *margaritatus*, but emphasized by the bright red surrounding it in *erythrocephalus*). We do not speculate further at this time, but call upon field observers to note such aberrancies in these and other barbets, and to report them to us, or publish their observations.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our studies in Kenya (LLS, JFMH) have been under research authorization from the Office of the President, and with the support of G.R. Cunningham-van Someren and R. Leahey of the National Museums of Kenya. Our investigations in Rwanda were assisted greatly by the Office de Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux of Rwanda. The Leonard C. Sanford and Ritter-Eisenmann funds of the American Museum of Natural History covered the expenses of LLS in Africa. We are grateful to these individuals and agencies, and to local persons too numerous to name individually, but without whose assistance the field work would have been more difficult and the results less satisfactory.

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AN IMPORTANT PASSERINE RINGING SITE NEAR  
THE SUDAN RED SEA COAST

G. Nikolaus

During continued ringing studies of Palaearctic migrant birds in the Sudan Red Sea coast Province during autumn 1982, a new and important site was discovered at Khor Arba'at (19.48°N, 37.03°E at an altitude of 100 m above sea level), some 15 km inland and immediately to the east of the Red Sea Hills. A water pumping station supplies the town of Port Sudan 25 km to the southeast from wells located on an island in a normally dry 500 m wide river bed. A small watered garden (50 x 15 m) on the island, with lemon and guava trees and date palms, provides the only concentrated green vegetation for many kilometres around during August and September. Except for a few scattered bushes along the *khor*, vegetation in the surrounding desert is quite leafless.

Three periods were spent netting migrants at Khor Arba'at during 1982, from 19-25 August, 3-10 September and 2-14 October. Over 4000 Palaearctic passerines were ringed at the site in all, and during the peak migration period in early September more than 1000 migrants were present daily in the garden. Nets (usually 6 x 12 m plus 6 x 6 m) were in position from dawn to 13:00 during the August and September periods and from dawn to dusk during October. They were checked frequently, for the average daily maximum shade temperature was 43°C during August and early September and 37°C in October.

Numbers of Palaearctic birds caught and ringed during the three periods are listed in Table 1. The Khor Arba'at 'oasis' site appears to have a potential for the ringing of passerine migrants similar to that of the Ngulia Lodge 'lighthouse' site in Kenya (Pearson & Backhurst 1976, Backhurst & Pearson 1977), situated some 2540 km almost due south in Africa. A comparison of migration at these two sites is of interest. Timing is very different: the main passerine passage on the Red Sea coast appears to occur during late August-September (see also Nikolaus & Pearson 1982), whereas that in eastern Kenya is about three months later, during November-December. There are marked similarities in species composition. Thus, at Ngulia the Marsh Warbler<sup>1</sup>, the Whitethroat and the Sprosser are the three main species involved, accounting between them for over 80 per cent of each season's ringing total. During peak migration the Marsh Warbler (36 per cent) was also easily the most frequently caught migrant at Khor Arba'at. Whitethroat (7 per cent) and Sprosser (7 per cent) were again second and third in order of predominance, but formed more minor components than they do at Ngulia. Almost the entire migration of the Marsh Warbler and the Sprosser into southern Africa appears to pass through central and eastern Kenya (Pearson & Backhurst 1976). Many of the birds involved presumably enter Africa across the Sudan Red Sea coast. The same may well apply in the case of the River Warbler, which accounted for 2 per cent of the Khor Arba'at August-September catch. This species has only rarely been recorded in well-worked areas of central Ethiopia (Ash 1973, 1977) and is found regularly on passage further south only in inland eastern Kenya. The case of the Whitethroat appears to be different. The high incidence at Khor Arba'at of adults with partially moulted primaries indicated that the population was not the same as that which crosses Ngulia.

The main differences in the species composition of the Khor Arba'at and Ngulia movements may also be discussed. In general a wider variety of passerines was represented at the former site. Many of the species caught

<sup>1</sup>Scientific names are given in Table 1

TABLE 1

Numbers of Palaearctic migrants caught and ringed  
at Khor Arba'at in autumn 1982

Species	19-25/8		2-10/9		2-14/10		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	0		2		0		2	
2 Quail <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	0		0		3		3	
3 Corncrake <i>Crex crex</i>	0		1		0		1	
4 Common Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	0		1		*		1	
5 Little Crake <i>Porzana parva</i>	0		0		1		1	
6 Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	0		1		5		6	
7 Eurasian Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	*		10		0		10	
8 Scops Owl <i>Otus scops</i>	0		1		0		1	
9 Eurasian Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>	*		1		*		1	
10 Blue-cheeked Bee-eater <i>M. persicus</i>	0		1		*		1	
11 Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>	10	1	5		2		17	
12 Eurasian Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>	0		3		1		4	
13 Eurasian Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	*		3		9	2	12	
14 Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	0		*		1		1	
15 Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	1		62	2	9	2	72	2
16 Rufous Bush Chat <i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	9	1	1		0		10	
17 Sprosser <i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	73	7	195	8	34	6	302	7
18 Nightingale <i>L. megarhynchos</i>	3		22	1	0		25	1
19 Bluethroat <i>L. svecica</i>	0		4		1		5	
20 Black-eared Wheatear <i>Oenanthe hispanica</i>	0		0		1		1	
21 Northern Wheatear <i>O. oenanthe</i>	0		1		0		1	
22 Redstart <i>Phoenicurus p. phoenicurus</i>	0		0		19	3	19	
22a White-winged Redstart <i>P. p. samamensis</i>	0		21	1	1		22	1
23 Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	0		2		4	1	6	
24 Stonechat <i>S. torquata</i>	0		1		0		1	
25 Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	23	2	51	2	10	2	84	2
26 Basra Reed Warbler <i>A. griseldis</i>	2		4		3		9	
27 Marsh Warbler <i>A. palustris</i>	665	62	794	31	67	11	1526	36
28 Sedge Warbler <i>A. schoenobaenus</i>	3		3		1		7	
29 Reed Warbler <i>A. scirpaceus</i>	39	4	165	7	125	21	329	8
30 Icterine Warbler <i>Hippolais icterina</i>	8	1	5		0		13	
31 Olivaceous Warbler <i>H. pallida</i>	63	6	24	3	2		139	3
32 River Warbler <i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	23	3	35	1	11	2	69	2
33 Savi's Warbler <i>L. luscinoides</i>	1		4		9	2	14	
34 Bonelli's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus bonelli</i>	1		0		0		1	
35 Wood Warbler <i>P. sibilatrix</i>	0		1		0		1	
36 Willow Warbler <i>P. trochilus</i>	12	1	236	9	7	1	255	6
37 Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	0		9		115	19	124	3
38 Garden Warbler <i>S. borin</i>	18	2	172	7	28	5	218	5
39 Whitethroat <i>S. communis</i>	45	4	224	9	8	1	277	7
40 Lesser Whitethroat <i>S. curruca</i>	0		20	1	3		23	1
41 Orphean Warbler <i>S. hortensis</i>	7	1	5		0		12	
42 Barred Warbler <i>S. nisoria</i>	14	1	36	1	2		52	1
43 Collared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula albicollis</i> <sup>1</sup>	0		0		1		1	
44 Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	12	1	107	4	8	1	127	3
45 Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i>	0		0		3		3	
46 Tree Pipit <i>A. trivialis</i>	0		5		13	2	18	

Table 1, cont.

Species	19-25/8		2-10/9		2-14/10		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
47 Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	*		2		0		2	
48 Yellow Wagtail <i>M. flava</i>	0		3		12	2	15	
49 Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	28	3	133	5	42	7	203	5
50 Great Grey Shrike <i>L. excubitor</i>	0		2		*		2	
51 Red-tailed <i>L. isabellinus</i>	0		6		3		9	
52 Lesser Grey Shrike <i>L. minor</i>	8	1	23	1	1		32	1
53 Nubian Shrike <i>L. nubicus</i>	9	1	46	2	13	2	68	2
54 Woodchat Shrike <i>L. senator</i>	0		9		1		10	
55 Pale Rock Sparrow <i>Petronia brachydactyla</i>	0		1		*		1	
56 Cretzschmar's Bunting <i>Emberiza caesia</i>	0		*		8		8	
57 Cinereous Bunting <i>E. cineracea</i>	0		1		0		1	
58 Ortolan Bunting <i>E. hortulana</i>	0		9		16	3	25	1
Totals	1077		2523		603		4203	

<sup>1</sup> race *semitorquata*, the Half-collared Flycatcher \*seen but not caught

frequently at Khor Arb'at winter in Ethiopia and the Sudan, but do not penetrate, at least in any numbers, south to Kenya. These include, for example, the Redstart, the Bluethroat, the Lesser Whitethroat, the Orphean Warbler, the Savi's Warbler, the Nubian and Woodchat Shrikes and the Ortolan Bunting. Five other species common at Khor Arba'at but scarce or absent at Ngulia are in a different category for they do reach southern Africa. These are the Great Reed Warbler, the Lesser Grey Shrike, the Golden Oriole, the Reed Warbler and the Blackcap. Of these, the first three winter mainly in the southern tropics. Their absence or relative scarcity on southward passage in East Africa suggests that their southward route from the Red Sea coast passes through south or southwest Sudan and eastern Zaire. The Reed Warbler was particularly common at Khor Arba'at in October. Again, there is no marked passage of this species through eastern Kenya (Pearson 1982), and the Red Sea birds were probably bound for wintering areas to the southwest, in southern Sudan, Uganda and Zaire. Blackcaps were common at Khor Arba'at; indeed, many more would have been caught in October but for their habit of remaining at the tops of the small fruit trees. The absence of this species at Ngulia perhaps implies that movement into highland wintering areas further south occurs further west.

A few migrants, common at Ngulia, were notable for their absence or low numbers at Khor Arba'at. Thus, the Irania *Irania gutturalis* has not yet been recorded in the Sudan, and presumably enters Africa entirely through Ethiopia and perhaps northern Somalia. The few Rufous Bush Chats caught at Khor Arba'at were of the nominate race; the eastern race *familiaris* was not encountered. The few Red-tailed Shrikes racially assignable were *L. i. speculigerus*; the race *phoenicuroides*, very common in Kenya, probably migrates through the horn of Africa. Finally, Olive-tree and Upcher's Warblers *Hippolais olivetorum* and *H. languida* are regular at Ngulia, presumably arriving via Ethiopia and northern Somalia; neither of these species was caught at Khor Arba'at.

Further work at Khor Arba'at is planned. A consolidated account of autumn migration here and elsewhere on the Sudan Red Sea coast is to be prepared.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank the Ministry of Wildlife, Khartoum and Mr Asir, Chief

Engineer; the study was only possible with their help. The Ministry was kind enough to issue me with the necessary permits and Mr Asir allowed me to work in the garden and stay in the Rest House. I also thank D.J. Pearson for comments on a draft of this paper.

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- G. Nikolaus, 219 Cuxhaven, Feldweg 87, West Germany

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## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

ATTRACTION OF NOCTURNAL MIGRANTS TO CAR HEADLIGHTS  
IN THE SUDAN RED SEA HILLS

The appearance of migrant birds at floodlights on moonless misty nights is well known in the Ngulia Hills, Kenya (Pearson & Backhurst 1976). Smaller numbers were also attracted under the same conditions to a single car headlight in the Chyulu Hills in November 1979 (Nikolaus 1980).

Low cloud is usual at night from October onwards on the Sudan Red Sea Hills. Attempts to attract migrants were therefore made using four 45W (12V) vehicle lights on the ENE-facing Erkowit escarpment (1000 m above sea level) during early October 1980. These attempts were unsuccessful; three birds were caught in all during periods of experiment late on four consecutive misty moonless nights, a Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*, a Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* and a Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* (see also Nikolaus 1981).

Observation during the autumns of 1980-82 has since established that the main passerine migration at the Red Sea occurs during late August-September, when the hills are still clear of mist; October movement is on a much reduced scale (Nikolaus & Pearson 1982, Nikolaus 1983 and unpubl. obs.). However, a further experiment with two car headlights plus an additional spotlight was made at Erkowit, in thick mist and with no moon, on the night of 17/18 October 1982, this time with more success.

During the first two hours of full darkness (18:00-20:00 local time) 17 birds were caught in two 12 m mist nets placed a few metres in front of the vehicle, and on the edge of the escarpment; over 100 others were seen. These birds appeared from the direction of the Red Sea, and dropped down to the lights from above. Short-toed Larks *Calandrella brachydactyla* and Yellow Wagtails *Motacilla flava* arrived in small groups, and the latter were heard calling before they appeared. Arrivals ceased rather suddenly about 20:00, and no birds were seen during the next half-hour, or during further half-hour periods with the lights on at about midnight and at 04:00. Birds which appeared soon after darkness had perhaps all taken off that evening from the 30 km wide coastal hinterland strip to the northeast of Erkowit. The lack of birds later at night on 17/18 October 1982, and during the 1980 experiments, could imply that migrants on flights originating on the Arabian side of the Red Sea were not attracted down, and perhaps flew at a greater height.

Migrants caught at Erkowit between 18:00 and 20:00 on 17 October 1982 were as follows: 3 Quails *Coturnix coturnix* (7 others seen), 3 Short-toed Larks (many others seen), 2 Black-eared Wheatears *Oenanthe hispanica*, 3 Yellow Wagtails (many others seen), 1 Sprosser *Luscinia luscinia*, 1 Reed Warbler, 1 Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*, 1 Garden Warbler *S. borin*, 1 Whitethroat, and 1 Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* (2 others seen). A few Ortolan Buntings *Emberiza hortulana* were seen but none was caught, and a few Tree Pipits *Anthus trivialis* were heard.

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JACK SNIPE *LYMNOCRYPTES MINIMUS*, COMMON SNIPE *GALLINAGO GALLINAGO* AND BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER *LIMICOLA FALCINELLUS* AT NDOLA, ZAMBIA

The purpose of this note is to document my Ndola records of three waders species which are rarely recorded in Zambia. No details of these records have appeared elsewhere, but mention was made in Taylor (1980) of the occurrence of the two snipe species at Ndola.

*Lymnocyptes minimus* Jack Snipe

I recorded this species on two occasions at Itawa swamps, Ndola (12.57'S, 28.47'E). One was flushed by my dog from short tussocky grass and mud on 6 March 1979, and one was seen standing on a muddy track in short wet grass on 4 February 1980. Both sightings were in the early morning. The birds were identified by their small size, short bills, bold pale lines on the back, graduated all-brown tails, mottled flanks, short legs, lack of pale central crown streak, and their flight. Great Snipe *Gallinago media* and African Snipe *G. nigripennis* were also present on both occasions, and in 1979 Common Snipe *G. gallinago* was also present for comparison. Full details of both records are on file at the Zoological Museum, Tring, England.

There is only one other record of the Jack Snipe from Zambia, that of one at Mwinilunga (11.44'S, 24.26'E) on 26 October 1946 (Benson *et al.* 1971). However, two were recorded as having been shot at Itawa on 31 December 1973 by the late Dr F.W. Gilbert, a keen wildfowler who had also shot this species in the UK (P. Gilbert *in litt.*). Although no details were preserved, this record would seem to be acceptable on the basis of Dr Gilbert's experience of snipe in Zambia and the UK. The Itawa records are the most southerly for the species in Africa.

*Gallinago gallinago* Common Snipe

One was present at Itawa on 3 March 1978, and one from 26 February 1979 to at least 9 March 1979, with at least two on 6 March 1979. Great and African Snipe were also present for comparison. The Common Snipe were identified using the criteria given in Taylor (1980); this paper also gives details of the habitat occupied by all three species. Benson *et al.* (1971) did not accept the occurrence of this species in Zambia, but Button (1973) showed that this snipe has reached Zambia in small numbers in several years (the latest year mentioned is 1964) and that in the early 1940s it was not uncommon at Itawa. It may be of regular occurrence in Zambia, and is probably overlooked, but my intensive observations at Itawa from 1975 to 1980 produced only the 1978 and 1979 sightings given above, so the bird's status at Ndola appears to have changed considerably in the last 40 years. The 1979 records were at the time of the greatest abundance of the other *Gallinago* species at Itawa.

*Limicola falcinellus* Broad-billed Sandpiper

One was at Kanini Sewage Works, Ndola (12.59'S, 28.38'E) on 21 October 1979, at a time of increased wader numbers following heavy storms on the previous day. The bird fed alongside Little Stint *Calidris minuta*, Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea* and other species. It was identified by its size (smaller than

*C. ferruginea* but larger than *C. minuta*), short legs, long bill drooping at the tip, grey upperparts with pale feather edges, dark carpal joint area, streaked breast, double eyestripe, indistinct pale wingbar, and dark tail and rump with whitish sides. It was also seen by C. Carter, who agrees with the identification (pers. comm.). A full description is on file at the Zoological Museum, Tring.

This is the second record of this species from Zambia, the first being of one at Mufulira (12.34'S, 28.16'E) on 1 and 2 November 1975 (Robinson 1976).

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UNREPORTED HUNTING BEHAVIOUR OF THE MADAGASCAR MALACHITE KINGFISHER  
<sup>1</sup>*CORYTHORNIS VINTSIOIDES* ON GRAND COMORO

The Madagascar Malachite Kingfisher is a regular, but not a common bird on Grand Comoro. Benson (1960) found it "only in the north of the island, at tree-fringed pools on the coast and at the Mitsamiouli crater-lake" and Forbes-Watson (1969) saw three on the coast and one "at c. 1,000 feet a.s.l." (i.e. about 2500 m from the coast) during a six-day stay. On the three other Comoro islands it is much more common and is also found inland, where it occurs along fresh water, which is lacking totally on Grand Comoro, a volcanic island without permanent rivers (Benson 1960).

Benson (1960) records as stomach contents on the Comoros, insects and, in three specimens, crustaceans. Milon, Petter & Randrianasolo (1973) state that in Madagascar the nominate race occurs along fresh waters but also along the coast in the northwest, although this pertains probably to mangroves (see Schlegel & Pollen 1868).

During a stay of about a month on Grand Comoro in July and August 1981 we met with the species twice in mangroves (once at Hahaia and once at Ourouéni, in the north). However, it was also seen in dry vegetation twice by R. Pot-vliege (pers. comm.) near Droude (a coastal village) and we observed one bird perched in a baobab at Dzahadjou (in the south about 2 km from the coast). Our final observation of the species near M'bachilé at the coast (11.45'S, 43.13'E) enabled us to witness an undescribed method of prey-catching.

At low water level a steep cliff about 3 m high is apparent in this locality and, along narrow ridges in the wall of this cliff, large numbers of small crabs were hiding. The kingfisher was first seen sitting on some rocks which emerged from the sea about 10 m away. It then made a short flight towards the cliff and quickly snatched a small crab from a hiding place. It immediately returned to its perch on the rocks and then made another flight towards the cliff a little later, after which it returned again to the perch. On our approach it flew away. To our knowledge this method of hunting has not been reported before in *Corythornis vintsioides*.

We thank C.H. Fry for commenting on our observation.

<sup>1</sup>We follow the nomenclature of Fry (1980)

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THE BLACK AND WHITE FLYCATCHER *BIAS MUSICUS* IN KENYA

Britton (1980) describes the Black and White Flycatcher *Bias musicus* as unrecorded in coastal Kenya for over 50 years, though suggesting that it might still occur in Rabai and Ribe forests. I can trace no recent records from inland Kenya either, apart from a single male specimen in the National Museum, Nairobi, that was collected at Maua in the Nyambeni Hills, Meru District in 1944, apparently by J.P. Benson (G.R. Cunningham-van Someren, pers. comm.). The racial identity of this apparently disjunct Meru population has not been properly determined; White (1963) gave the range of *changamwensis* as "Kenya inland to the eastern side of the rift" but it is not clear whether he examined any specimen from Meru District.

Very little now remains of the Nyambeni Forest, but about 20 km east of Maua lies the little-known Ngaia Forest, covering about 36 km<sup>2</sup> at a much lower altitude than the Nyambeni Forest (1100-1400 m). On 26 November 1978, during an investigation of the ecology and avifauna of the forest (Diamond & V.C. Fayad, unpubl.) I heard a harsh nasal call note from a flycatcher about 10 m up in a broad-leaved tree. The bird was identified as a female *Bias musicus*; I did not know the species, and was not aware of its present rarity in Kenya, but the short chestnut tail, very broad black bill, conspicuous white eye, white underparts, black crown and chestnut upperparts cannot be confused with any other species. The bird was foraging actively for insects beneath the edge of the canopy, frequently flying up to pick insects from the underside of a leaf as well as sallying out to catch them in mid-air, and it remained under observation for over five minutes. It was easy to find on subsequent days once the call was heard, but I came across no more in the forest. If Ngaia Forest is its last refuge in inland Kenya, other than any that may persist in the remaining vestiges of the Nyambeni Forest, then its status must be regarded as threatened since the Ngaia Forest is being rapidly over-exploited for timber, charcoal and poles.

The sighting reported above is referred to by Britton (1980).

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We are sorry for the late appearance of this note. Ed.

THE FIRST RECORD OF THE NORTHEASTERN RACE OF THE NORTHERN RED BISHOP  
*EUPLECTES FRANCISCANUS* FOR KENYA

Due to an oversight, Britton (1980) treated the Northern Red Bishop as a monotypic species (P.L. Britton *in litt.*). This note reports the finding of the distinctive Ethiopian and Somali race *pusillus* in Kenya for the first time.

On 25 March 1978 D.R. Waugh and I located a small group of *Euplectes franciscanus*, comprising two males and three females, 40 km north of Marsabit town on the edge of the Dida Galgalla desert (2.40'N, 38.05'E). They were identified as of the race *pusillus* on account of the orange in the plumage of the males as opposed to the red-orange of nominate birds from the Baringo area (pers. obs.) and from Uganda (National Museum, Nairobi, collection).

Britton (1980) gives the range of nominate *franciscanus* in Kenya as an "apparently disjunct population in and around the rift valley ... from Elgeyo and Eldama Ravine east to the N Uaso Nyiro River, including Lakes Baringo and Bogoria." The Marsabit birds were some 300 km northeast of the rift valley lakes mentioned by Britton but only 200 km south of the type locality of *pusillus* at Lake Stephanie, in southern Ethiopia.

J.S. Ash (*in litt.*) has a recent breeding record from Ethiopia at 4.30'N, 36.30'E, just west of Lake Stephanie and sight records from further east at 4.30'N, 37.30'E (Ethiopia) and 4.00'N, 42.00'E, east of Mandera on the Ethiopia/Somalia border.

In conjunction with the above sighting it is worth noting that exceptional numbers of Fire-fronted Bishops *E. diadematus* occurred in eastern Kenya during 1978, particularly in March and April (pers. obs. and *Scopus* 5: 116). Outside Kenya and northeastern Tanzania *diadematus* is only found in Somalia south of 3N (J.S. Ash, *in litt.*), and records of wandering examples of this species as far west as Marsabit (Britton 1980) could thus be of Somali origin.

I am grateful to the Kenya Meteorological Department for rainfall data for 1978, to J.S. Ash for his very useful unpublished records and to P.L. Britton for his help.

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*Scopus* 7: 23, March 1983

Received 4 December 1981

We are sorry for the late appearance of this note. Ed.

## RANGE EXTENSION AND POPULATION INCREASE OF THE HOUSE SPARROW IN KENYA

The Indian race of the House Sparrow *Passer domesticus indicus* has been known for many years as an introduced species in Mombasa (van Someren 1932). This note describes the recent rapid population increase of these birds and their extension of breeding range inland, and discusses their potential for further extension to Nairobi.

The population increase of the House Sparrow in and around Mombasa is evident from the records given here. Initially van Someren (1932) reported the presence of the bird in Mombasa, but Jackson's (1938) comment on the lack of supporting specimens may well have prompted Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960) to describe its presence there merely as 'probable'. Its rarity in the town in earlier years, despite the presence of ample, apparently suitable habitat, was noted by Forbes-Watson (1972), who could trace no record subsequent to van Someren's (1932) report, and who considered its continued presence there to be uncertain. Similarly, McVicker (1982) did not personally see the species until 1981, despite being resident in Mombasa from 1953 and a frequent visitor to the dock area between 1953 and 1961, though other observers reported the

occasional single bird or pair to him from 1973 onwards.

In 1979, however, small numbers were 'established' in the old town, docks and causeway areas of Mombasa (East African Bird Report 1979), while by February of the following year five or six pairs were breeding in Moi International Airport (East African Bird Report 1980). The most noteworthy expansion of 1980 was D.A. Turner's record of several at Mariakani (3.52S, 39.28'E) on 20 August, which represented an extension of approximately 30 km inland (East African Bird Report 1980).

During 1981, McVicker (1982) observed a flock of 25-30 at the airport in May, and also recorded several in October around the Manor Hotel and Moi Avenue in Mombasa itself; finally, during December, he noted a spread of the species to the vicinities of Mombasa Hospital and Bamburi, though he considered this expansion to have subsequently been arrested by adverse weather conditions.

By May 1982, however, Cunningham-van Someren (1982) noted at least 100 individuals at the airport, and also numbers around the Manor Hotel and the Kenya Meat Commission building. There was widespread nest construction at the airport, where the birds had become a serious pest that required deployment of a small labour force to dispose of both their droppings and their numerous nests: the species was considered to be 'firmly established' on Mombasa island and its outskirts.

Following these population and range increases, a further more radical range extension has occurred. On 12 August 1982, H. Gomez de Silva observed a pair feeding young at the Caltex petrol station on the main A109 Nairobi-Mombasa road on the outskirts of Voi (3.23'S, 38.34'E). The young birds were not visible, but were heard calling loudly from the nest hole (EANHS Nest Record Card and HGS in litt.). This record represented a range extension of about 110 km northwest from Mariakani, and an extension of known breeding range of approximately 140 km inland from Mombasa.

There are four subsequent records of the species from this petrol station. D.A. Turner (pers. comm.) observed a male there on 11 November 1982. Four days later, I watched a pair flying around the station's buildings: the nest site was not detected, but the presence of other young was demonstrated by the female depositing a faecal sac on the garage forecourt. The male made several foraging trips to the edge of the *shambas* directly behind the garage, and was ignored by several Grey-headed Sparrows *P. griseus* in the near vicinity. Despite a prolonged search, I was unable to locate any further individuals, so that the fate of the August brood remains obscure, though very high infant mortality is a characteristic of this species (Penny 1974).

A month later, on 23 December, H. Gomez de Silva (in litt.) again recorded young at the petrol station, this time in a nest under the roof of the vehicle inspection pit. The female was feeding the brood, and two adult males were in the near vicinity. Four days later, the same observer revisited the garage and, in addition to the nestlings still being fed, observed one of the males constructing another nest under the same roof. This production of at least three broods in just over four months is typical of the species in India, where from three to six broods per season are reared, depending on the climate and the availability of food for the insectivorous young (Penny 1974).

The mode of range extension involved here appears to conform to a well established pattern. Most bird species successfully introduced on to continents initially become established in coastal towns, because these constitute the single environmental niche that may be left vacant by the indigenous species: thus the more successful introduced species are often those that are commensals of man (Forbes-Watson 1972). All but one of the sites mentioned by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960) as having been colonized by the House Sparrow are on the coast and have large docks, or at least harbours. The single exception is Khartoum, in the Sudan, which is an inland port and trade centre

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Following these population and range increases, a further more radical range extension has occurred. On 12 August 1982, H. Gomez de Silva observed a pair feeding young at the Caltex petrol station on the main A109 Nairobi-Mombasa road on the outskirts of Voi (3.23'S, 38.34'E). The young birds were not visible, but were heard calling loudly from the nest hole (EANHS Nest Record Card and HGdS in litt.). This record represented a range extension of about 110 km northwest from Mariakani, and an extension of known breeding range of approximately 140 km inland from Mombasa.

There are four subsequent records of the species from this petrol station. D.A. Turner (pers. comm.) observed a male there on 11 November 1982. Four days later, I watched a pair flying around the station's buildings: the nest site was not detected, but the presence of other young was demonstrated by the female depositing a faecal sac on the garage forecourt. The male made several foraging trips to the edge of the *shambas* directly behind the garage, and was ignored by several Grey-headed Sparrows *P. griseus* in the near vicinity. Despite a prolonged search, I was unable to locate any further individuals, so that the fate of the August brood remains obscure, though very high infant mortality is a characteristic of this species (Penny 1974).

A month later, on 23 December, H. Gomez de Silva (in litt.) again recorded young at the petrol station, this time in a nest under the roof of the vehicle inspection pit. The female was feeding the brood, and two adult males were in the near vicinity. Four days later, the same observer revisited the garage and, in addition to the nestlings still being fed, observed one of the males constructing another nest under the same roof. This production of at least three broods in just over four months is typical of the species in India, where from three to six broods per season are reared, depending on the climate and the availability of food for the insectivorous young (Penny 1974).

The mode of range extension involved here appears to conform to a well established pattern. Most bird species successfully introduced on to continents initially become established in coastal towns, because these constitute the single environmental niche that may be left vacant by the indigenous species: thus the more successful introduced species are often those that are commensals of man (Forbes-Watson 1972). All but one of the sites mentioned by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960) as having been colonized by the House Sparrow are on the coast and have large docks, or at least harbours. The single exception is Khartoum, in the Sudan, which is an inland port and trade centre



via the Nile. The deliberate introduction of this species as a cage bird seems unlikely due to its rather drab appearance and harsh, noisy character. Instead, it seems much more likely that, as a facet of its well known familiarity with man and his surroundings, it has come aboard ships at ports in India and Arabia, possibly in search of nesting sites, and then left the vessels to colonize the habitations around their ports of call. In view of the species' nesting attempts actually inside aeroengines, on the Comoros early in the last decade (D.A. Turner pers. comm.) and at Kenana in the Sudan during October 1982 (F. Alexander in litt.), it is quite easy to envisage the inadvertent imprisonment of individuals in ships' cargo holds, with release only when the holds were opened in port for off-loading. Penny (1974) presumed introduction of the species on to the Amirantes to have been accidental, possibly via a shipload of rice from Africa.

The current mode of range extension in Kenya seems to be related to this ship-borne method. Random dispersal from Mombasa appears unlikely since, with the single exception of a female 20 km to the south near Tiwi (4.14'S, 39.36'E) on 19 December 1982 (C. Briffett pers. comm.), the species has yet to be reported from other apparently suitable settlements along the coast. However, both Mariakani and Voi are on the main Nairobi-Mombasa road and railway links, and it seems likely that the birds are being transported in heavy road vehicles or, more probably, in trains. Given the penetration of aircraft engines mentioned above, individuals could easily enter railway freight wagons, to be released when the cars are opened at a station. A search of the railway stations and heavy vehicle stopping places between Mombasa and Voi may well disclose further populations of sparrows. In this connection, there is an unconfirmed record from Mtito Andei (2.41'S, 38.10'E) - a locality which straddles the road and the railway (per D.A. Turner).

The remaining question is, of course, whether the House Sparrow will continue its presumably assisted advance up the railway and/or roads to enter Nairobi, where the abundance of nesting sites and food might produce a dramatic population increase which, in view of the events at Mombasa's airport, could be the cause of considerable expense to the civic authorities. Though Nairobi appears remote from Voi in both distance and altitude, a chance train-assisted passage could bridge the distance in hours. Periodic searches of the environs of Nairobi railway station appear worthwhile since eradication is known to be extremely difficult after a breeding population of any size has been established (Penny 1974).

The potential for competition from highland species is uncertain, but is worth considering since an introduction of the House Sparrow on to the Seychelles in 1965 may have failed due to competition with the ubiquitous Madagascar Fody *Foudia madagascariensis*, which is similarly common around human settlements and commensal with man (Penny 1974). The House Sparrow appeared to coexist peacefully with the Grey-headed Sparrow at Voi, but has yet to make contact with the more closely related Rufous Sparrow *P. motitensis* of higher altitudes. However, the Rufous Sparrow does not show so great a preference for human habitations so that a niche for the House Sparrow may well be available in urban Nairobi.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to D.A. Turner for discussion and for unpublished records, and to H. Gomez de Silva and C. Briffett for the use of their unpublished data. Finally, thanks to F. Ng'weno who drew my attention to the nest record card in the first place.

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#### A RECORD OF THE GREY-CRESTED HELMET SHRIKE NEAR NAIVASHA, KENYA

The Grey-crested Helmet Shrike *Prionops poliophlopa* is endemic to Kenya and Tanzania, and has recently attracted comment due to its range fluctuations and erratic occurrence; of particular interest have been its extension of range northwards to the Nakuru area, and the fact that it was not recorded in the Naivasha area, the type locality, between 1926 and 1979 (Lewis 1981, 1982). A second recent record for the Naivasha area is reported here.

T. Stevenson (pers. comm.) observed a flock of seven individuals flying across the new Naivasha-Nakuru road, 19 km north of Naivasha town, on 2 November 1982. Having been initially detected in flight, the birds were followed and watched perched in a low bush, to confirm the identification.

Lewis (1981) suggested that the species might reach Nakuru during post-reproductive dispersal from its breeding grounds in the Kenya-Tanzania border region. Since all available breeding indications are in April-May (Fischer & Reichenow 1884, Jackson 1901, Betts 1966), this view was supported by the other post-1926 record from the Naivasha-Kedong area, the flock on 21 July 1979, at Mt Longonot (Lewis 1982). On this basis, the November date of this latest record appears too late in the year for a post-breeding movement, but does provide a further example of a foraging party in the eastern rift, within the October-February range of the recent Nakuru sightings.

The occurrence of *P. poliophlopa* at Naivasha is certainly a very uncommon phenomenon since, while Lewis (1981) suggested misidentification as the Helmet Shrike *P. plumata* as one potential reason for the general paucity of records of *P. poliophlopa*, the very numerous species lists for the Naivasha area contributed to the Kenyan bird atlas scheme (Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.) do not mention either species.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very grateful to Terry Stevenson for the details of his observation.

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Adrian D. Lewis, Department of Geology, Box 30197, Nairobi

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## REPORT

### A BIRD ATLAS FOR KENYA: A PROGRESS REPORT

In order to complement similar studies being undertaken in eastern and other parts of Africa, the Ornithological Sub-Committee (OSC) of the East Africa Natural History Society (1979) introduced a scheme to map bird distributions in East Africa. Turner (1981) presented a map showing the overall progress of this study for Kenya and Tanzania, and noted that further summaries would appear.

Since late in 1981, the proposal for an East African mapping scheme or bird atlas has been superseded by separate studies based on each of the individual East African countries, and co-ordinated by individuals rather than by the OSC as a whole. The reason for this has been the predictably more rapid accumulation of data for Kenya, which has caused this country's scheme to quickly reach an advanced stage. While the progress to date of the Kenyan scheme has been reported in seven privately circulated progress reports, more widespread circulation by means of this publication is intended to attract new contributors; fundamental changes from the format and approach of the initial stages of the scheme are also given.

#### THE FORMAT OF THE KENYA SCHEME

1. The Kenya scheme has retained the use of quarter square degrees (i.e.  $\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{4}$  degree squares) as suggested by the Fifth Pan-African Ornithological Congress (Ash & Pomeroy 1981) and by the OSC (1979). While the choice of this grid has attracted criticism on the grounds that it will not provide such resolution of detail as finer grids (Cunningham-van Someren 1982), its usefulness is endorsed by the following points. Firstly, the use of this scale facilitates rapid progress and is particularly suitable for countries as large as Kenya and with such a relatively small observer force. It is our aim to conclude the study within the near future, so as to establish a baseline on which to measure future trends. This was noted as a basic objective of such schemes by Ash & Pomeroy (1981). A finer grid, while providing more resolution of detail, would inevitably take far longer to complete: for a country the size of Kenya, assuming a uniform rate of one 10-km square daily, 17 years would be needed for complete coverage, so that distributions mapped in the early stages of the scheme may well have changed by the end of the study.

Secondly, the use of a coarser grid allows the incorporation of far more

poorly sited records. This is particularly relevant to a country like Kenya, where vast amounts of data are already extant, both in the literature and in observers' personal records, but frequently not sited to within 10-km grid accuracy.

Thirdly, the usefulness of the present scale and rapid approach has been demonstrated by the significant and interpretable results and distributions shown by our species maps, and by the results already made available by the scheme, both privately to individual researchers and in published form (summarized below).

2. The submission of monthly data was requested by the OSC (1979) and classed as optional by the P-AOC (1981); this format has been used by Cyrus & Robson (1980) in the *Bird atlas of Natal*. We have decided to discard this method because of the extended period required for its completion, plus the fact that the more complicated type of data required could well deter contributors. We feel that the excellent response that we have drawn from contributors is in no small part due to the simplicity of the data that we have requested. Thus the Kenya scheme maps just the presence or absence of a species, plus breeding data.

3. The OSC (1979) requested the recording of breeding as a single, undifferentiated factor, but we follow the P-AOC (1981) in discriminating between 'probable' (in their case, 'possible') and 'confirmed' categories. Using the criteria given in the *Atlas of breeding birds in Britain and Ireland* (Sharrock 1976), we class probable breeding as breeding phenomena numbers three to nine inclusive, and confirmed breeding as ten to sixteen inclusive. Breeding data will always form a minority of the records in such a scheme, and particularly in one lasting for a relatively short period, and the use of this 'probable' category has certainly provided many more data.

4. We are dividing records into two categories according to date. Most of our records post-date 1 January 1970, and data collection will probably cease in early 1984. This is shorter than the 1970-1990 period suggested by the P-AOC (1981), but our reasons for rapid completion have already been given. Our second category of records pre-dates 1 January 1970, and accounts for about 10 per cent of the total. The extra time required for the collection of this 'pre' data has been small, and apparent range fluctuations as shown by variations in the 'pre' and 'post' distributions of species (e.g. bustards *Otididae*) have added a valuable extra dimension to the study.

#### THE PROGRESS OF THE SCHEME

##### *Sources of data*

By far the greatest contribution to the scheme has come from ornithologists and birdwatchers living in Kenya, though a few have responded from overseas. The collection of these data has proceeded in three stages. Firstly we incorporated all our own records, and then collected data from members of the OSC and other interested observers personally known to us; finally, via requests for information published in the *EANHS Bulletin* and in the *Newsletter* of the Kenya Museum Society, and also by means of numerous comprehensive requests by personal letter, we extended our coverage to a good proportion of the active observers in the country. Over 90 observers are, or have been, involved in the scheme.

In addition to the above, we have extracted all relevant information from the specimen collection of the National Museum, Nairobi, and from the East Africa Natural History Society's Nest Record Scheme. Other sources covered include Jackson (1938), Britton (1980), *Scopus*, the *EANHS Bulletin* and other journals. Finally, several trips have been made to collect data from poorly

known areas of Kenya, and more of these are planned.

#### *Methods, and progress of compilation*

The records were initially listed in copies of the *Check-list of the birds of Kenya* (Ornithological Sub-Committee 1981): one of these booklets was used for each of the one-degree squares in the country, and each of the check-list's four columns for one of the constituent quarter square degrees. These data were later transferred to a series of maps, one per species, showing the quarter square degree grid in Kenya. Subsequently, new records have been entered on both the maps and the check-lists.

Since August 1981, over 30 500 post-1970 presence records have been entered on the scheme, plus breeding data. The total number of records examined is certainly over three times this figure since, particularly for the better known areas, many have been duplicates. Pre-1970 records are accepted only where there is an absence of post-1970 data. These pre-1970 records have not been accurately counted, but they certainly total over 3000.

The progress of our coverage of Kenya is continuously updated on regularly produced progress maps, which show the number of species recorded post-1970 for each of the quarter square degrees in the country. Copies of these maps and further information on the scheme can be obtained from ADL.

We have also compiled a series of transparent overlays to aid in the interpretation of the maps. These overlays show altitude, rainfall, Bailey's moisture index (Bailey 1979), six categories of surface water, four categories of woodland and forest, and principal towns and roads.

#### *Interpretation and use of results*

Most species maps show interpretable distributions and, while data collection will continue until at least the end of 1983, our main effort now lies in the use of the overlays and reference literature to interpret these distributions, and to compile a short summary account of the various aspects of the distribution of each species in the avifauna of Kenya. Our objective is then to publish this text, the maps and the overlays as an atlas of the birds of Kenya.

As mentioned above, some preliminary results of the scheme have already been published (Lewis & Pomeroy 1982a,b, Pomeroy, Lewis & Mutere 1982, Lewis 1982, 1983) and more notes and papers are in preparation. In addition, the scheme's distribution maps and/or other data files have been made available to the following researchers: H. Adan (Northern Olive Thrush *Turdus abyssinicus* and congeners); G.R. Cunningham-van Someren (Narina's and Bar-tailed Trogons *Apaloderma narina* and *A. vittatum*); C. Gichuki (Speke's Weaver *Ploceus spekei*); V. Haas (Anteater and Sooty Chats *Myrmecocichla aethiops* and *M. nigra*); International Council for Bird Preservation (all species of bustards Otididae in Kenya).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge grants from the East Africa Natural History Society to fund various aspects of the scheme, as well as the donation by the Ornithological Sub-Committee of the Society of 64 copies of their *Check-list of the birds of Kenya* for use as data collection files.

While a complete list of contributors will appear in the published version of the study, we would like at this stage to express our sincere thanks to Mrs Mary Sinclair for untold hours of toil during the extraction of data, both from the EANHs Nest Record Scheme and from the National Museum collection, and during the transfer of (at the time) 20 000 data points from the check-lists to the species maps.

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## REVIEW

*Bird Migration in Africa - Movements between six continents.*

By Kai Curry-Lindahl, 1981. London: Academic Press.

Volume 1: 510 pp; 13 text figures, 255 maps and several tables. £41.40;  
Volume 2: 274 pp; 32 half-page black and white habitat photographs, tables,  
bibliography. £20.60.

Although this work inevitably invites comparison with Reg Moreau's *The Palaearctic-African bird migration systems*, published, also by Academic Press, some ten years earlier, it must be emphasized that its attempted scope is much larger. In addition to the subject of Palaearctic migrants in sub-Saharan Africa, it deals with movements between Eurasia and North Africa, within continental Africa and between Africa and Madagascar. Information is given on over 450 Eurasian breeding species or sub-species, and over 530 forms classified as inter-African migrants. There are also short sections dealing with seabirds which visit African coasts, and vagrants from the Nearctic.

After three introductory chapters, the bulk of Volume 1 is taken up by two sections on movements and distribution, dealing respectively with Eurasian birds in Africa and intra-African migrants. Data on individual species are presented in extended tables, accompanied in many cases by half-page maps. The shorter Volume 2 comprises small chapters on selected topics, including nocturnal migration, stepwise migration between different African wintering areas and the physiological problems of migration. Information on the preferred habitats and behaviour of Eurasian species in Africa is given in further tables. The volume contains an extensive and useful bibliography.

The treatment of Palaearctic migrants in sub-Saharan Africa is disappointing. Apart from some new data of the author from Zaire, and discussion of some recent findings from Ethiopia and Kenya, there is little to add to the general picture given by Moreau. Recent work on waders on the Atlantic coasts of Africa receives scant coverage, as indeed does West Africa generally. Data on individual Palaearctic species is commonly distributed between four tables, two in each volume, which tends to make reference unnecessarily cumbersome. Wintering distributions south of the Sahara are shown in reasonable detail on well-produced maps, but brief accompanying accounts fail to do justice to much of the information which has emerged over the past fifteen years. Moreover, some erroneous impressions are given. For example, the Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* is not known to winter in Kenya as implied, and neither the Dunlin *Calidris alpina* nor the Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* is recorded from the East African coast. The concentrated migration of the Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* through eastern Kenya is well known, and indeed emphasized in Chapter 14 of this book, yet Map 161 shows the main passage of the species as occurring through Uganda.

The treatment of migration timing is limited. The spring dates given in Table 1 rely heavily on the author's experience in Zaire and Sweden, and are unfortunately extreme dates rather than times of peak migration. Further information on early autumn arrival in the northern tropics would have been useful.

The section on intra-African migration is extensive, and some well established examples of regular long distance movements are described. However, the movements of the majority of examples dealt with here are still poorly understood, and many surely exemplify migration only in the very broadest

sense of the term.

Although it may facilitate interspecies comparisons, the tabular system of data presentation which accounts for some 70 per cent of the text is not on the whole successful, particularly since only a minimum of integration and discussion has been attempted within the main chapters. Moreover, this system has led to a surprisingly extravagant use of space, presumably reflected in the book's extremely high price.

*Bird migration in Africa* should prove useful to specialist workers, but despite the attractive title its wider appeal is likely to be limited.

*Scopus* 7: 31-32, March 1983

D.J. Pearson

## NOTICES

### ELSAMERE CONSERVATION CENTRE, NAIVASHA

The Elsamere Conservation Centre is to be opened in August 1983 at Lake Naivasha. Elsamere was the home of the late Joy Adamson and belongs now to the Elsa Trust (Elsa Ltd.). It was Mrs Adamson's wish that her beautifully situated home, set in a forest of fever trees on the shores of Lake Naivasha, should be used for the furtherance of conservation work in Kenya.

The house is being enlarged but will retain the character of a private home, and will be much as Mrs Adamson knew it. Initially there will be accommodation for 13 people in six double rooms and one single. Bathroom facilities are available and home-made farmhouse food will be provided. Mrs Adamson's own room, which she used as a bedroom and workroom, will be maintained as a museum of her work and will be used too for seminars and small conferences.

Elsamere is not an hotel and will only be available for genuine conservation usage. Its residential charges will be at a very low rate to aid the study of conservation in Kenya.

Any bona fide research worker or university group studying any of the biological or geological sciences, including any member of the East Africa Natural History Society, East Africa Wild Life Society or Kenya Museum Society may stay at Elsamere. In addition, members of overseas scientific societies are likely to be eligible to stay.

Further information may be obtained from The Warden, Elsamere Conservation Centre, Box 4, Naivasha, Kenya.

### EAST AFRICAN BIRD REPORT 1982

We regret that the 1981 Report has only just been published. We plan to produce the 1982 Report more quickly but to do this we need the co-operation of all observers.

Please send your records by 30 April 1983, or as soon after as possible; Palaearctics to Dr D.J. Pearson, Department of Biochemistry, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi, and all other species to D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi.

Guidelines for the submission of records are given in the 1981 Report (*Scopus* 5 (5), March 1983) and lists of rare and requested species are in the *Scopus* Supplement of June 1982. Spare copies of the Supplement are available from D.A. Turner.



Any references cited should be listed at the end of the contribution following the form used in this issue. *Names of periodicals MUST be given in full and, in the case of books, the town of publication and the publisher should be given.* A number of works, which are cited frequently, should not be listed under 'References'; the name(s) of the author(s) and date(s) of publication should be given in the text in the normal way.

All contributions should be sent to Dr D.J. Pearson, Department of Biochemistry, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi, Kenya.

#### WORKS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE LISTED UNDER 'REFERENCES'

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#### EAST AFRICAN BIRD REPORT

This forms the fifth issue of *Scopus* and each report covers one calendar year. Records of Afrotropical Region (i.e. Ethiopian Region and Malagasy Sub-Region) and Oceanic birds should be sent to D.A. Turner [tel. 48772], Box 48019, Nairobi; records of Palaearctic Region birds to D.J. Pearson [tel. 47041], Box 30197, Nairobi. Records should be sent in early in the new year to ensure the speedy production of the Bird Report. Reports of rare birds may be phoned through to any OS-C member.

#### BIRDS OF EAST AFRICA

Copies of this 270 page book are available from the EANH.S, Box 44486, Nairobi at the following post-paid prices. All cheques should be made out to the E.A.N.H.S. Those overseas *MUST* remit in Sterling, US\$ or the equivalent in a convertible currency; drafts in Kenya Shillings cannot be accepted.

By surface mail to East Africa or to anywhere in the world: Shs. 130/-, £8.00 or US\$17.00. Airmail, Africa: £11.50 or US\$24.00. Airmail to Europe: £12.00 or US\$25.00. Airmail to the Americas, Australia and the Far East: £13.50 or US\$28.00.

The 40 page *Check-list of the birds of Kenya* is available from D.A. Turner. Post-paid: surface: East Africa Shs. 12.00, anywhere in the world £0.70 or US \$1.50. Airmail to anywhere in the world £1.00 or US\$2.20.

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GRAEME BACKHURST

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# SCOPUS

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Tables, which should be numbered, *should appear in the typescript, NOT grouped on separate sheets at the end*. Metric units should be used. If non-metric units were used in the original observation or experiment, the approximate metric equivalent should be given in brackets.

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*Continued inside back cover*

# SCOPUS

## UNUSUAL BREEDING RECORDS MADE FROM A HELICOPTER IN TANZANIA

C.C.H. Elliott

Helicopters have been used for surveying for Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* breeding colonies in Tanzania since 1978. The area covered by the surveys has included a broad band of country from Mbeya in the south, north to Lake Jipe, west as far as Lake Natron and Shinyanga and east as far as Kilosa. Surveys were most often conducted at about 50 m above the ground at a speed of about 190 km/h, but the helicopter could be slowed down to a hover to make precise observations. The quelea surveys provided an opportunity to make incidental observations on the contents of large nests in the tops of trees or in other difficult of access breeding sites. The more unusual of these observations are recorded below.

### BREEDING RECORDS

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*. At least five nests were seen on 17 May 1981 in dense reed beds in the swamps 10-15 km NE of Kilosa (6.50S, 36.59E). The clutches of the turquoise-blue eggs were one (two nests), two (1) and three (2) compared to those given by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1957) of 2-5, suggesting that breeding had only recently started, towards the end of the rains.

Rufous-bellied Heron *Ardeola rufiventris*. Singles of this species are regularly encountered around Mbarali State Rice Farm (8.35S, 38.40E) in southern Tanzania. On 22 April 1981 a flock of about 100 birds was disturbed from a dense reed bed about 40 km N of the farm in the swamps of the Usangu Flats (8.30S, 34.15E). Because of the very dense vegetation, it was impossible to detect any nests, but the presence of a breeding colony seemed the most logical explanation of such an unusual congregation of this species. Other similar species breeding in the vicinity at that time included Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala* and Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopica*. According to Britton (1980) only one other breeding record for *Ardeola rufiventris* exists for East Africa - a colony of eight pairs in Busi Swamp, Uganda, but colonies of up to 30 nests are known in southern Africa (McLachlan & Liversidge 1970).

On 29 April 1983, 5 km S of Mbarali State Rice Farm, about 30 Rufous-bellied Herons were seen sitting on the outside of two small (0.25 ha) areas of reeds.

When the helicopter approached, a further 30 birds burst out of the reeds. We hovered over the area searching for nests and saw one bird floundering on what appeared to be a nest, half-way down into the reeds, but we could not see whether the bird concerned was a well grown chick or an adult protecting its nest contents. When we left the area, we noticed that the birds returned very quickly to the patches of reeds. These observations would seem to be further evidence of communal breeding of this heron in the area.

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*. Brown & Britton (1980) give only 13 records for the whole of East Africa, of which five are from Tanzania. The six records I have are all of nests in the tops of tall trees in May. Four were along the Manonga River, 50 km S of Shinyanga (at 3.50S, 33.20E) (clutches C2 3 May 1978, C3 3 May 1979, C3 23 May 1981 and C4 1 May 1982) and two on the Usangu Flats of the Ruaha valley (2 young plus a possible egg on 10 May 1978 and 2 young on 15 May 1979). The clutch of four seems one more than usual compared to southern Africa (McLachlan & Liversidge 1970) and the presence of chicks in May in the south suggests that breeding takes place at least one month earlier there than in Shinyanga.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*. A breeding colony of about 3000-5000 pairs was observed on a mudbank in the middle of Lake Eyasi (3.40S, 35.05E) on 28 April 1982. Almost all the nest mounds contained a single egg, but three small chicks were also seen. It was not possible to inspect any eggs so it is uncertain if the chicks were early hatchers or if the colony was relatively asynchronous. No Marabous *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* or mammalian predators were seen in the area, which was at least 5 km from the nearest, western, shore. All around the colony were large numbers of Lesser Flamingos *Phoeniconaias minor*, but no sign of breeding was seen. The breeding of the Greater Flamingos might have been related to the exceptionally good 'short' rains reported from the Oldeani region in December/January, the run-off of which goes into the lake. A similar flight over the lake in 1981 did not reveal any breeding, nor were many flamingos of either species seen. A flight over Lake Natron in June 1982 revealed very many fewer flamingos than had been seen in April in Lake Eyasi, and no sign of breeding or even of old nest mounds.

Lake Eyasi is a new breeding locality for the Greater Flamingo. Eyasi has been checked by air before (Brown 1973) but without success, so it is not clear if it is a regular breeding site or an exceptional one. On the other hand, the ability of the species to nest in almost any month (nine out of 12 at Lake Elmenteita, Kenya - Brown 1975) means that aerial surveys would have to be carried out every three months to be sure of detecting breeding.

In Brown's (1975) speculations on the age to which Greater Flamingos would have to live to replace themselves (58 yr at the high predation rate seen at Elmenteita), he mentioned that this surmise would be exploded if new breeding grounds were discovered. It remains to be established whether Lake Eyasi contributes to that explosion by being proved to be a regular breeding site or not.

African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*. This species was one of the commonest seen from the helicopter and small colonies of five or more nests were occasionally noted in patches of tall trees along river beds. The main difficulty was the disinclination of the sitting bird to get off the nest, even when being affected by the down-wash of the helicopter, which might have endangered the nest contents if we went too close.

Our surveys, starting in March, showed a fairly precise start to breeding in northern Tanzania in late May each year (all nests, one egg only: near Arusha 29 May 1982 (2), 30 May 1982 (2); south of Moshi: 6 June 1982 (4)). Prior to that, empty nests were seen or, later, vultures were seen standing beside

empty nests. Not until late May were birds seen sitting and the first egg noted. In the extreme south of the country, around the Usangu Flats, nests were seen on 16 May 1980 (one with one egg, two with tight-sitting birds), in central Tanzania nests were seen near Kondoa (4.54S, 35.47E) in early May 1981 (three with one egg, two nests with birds sitting tight) and on 20 May 1980 (one with one egg). There is therefore a slight indication that breeding may be about two or three weeks earlier, but not more, in the south than in the north. This would be expected if the breeding is matched to the rains in order to fledge chicks at the end of the dry season.

Rüppell's Vulture *Gyps rueppellii*. Only one definite breeding site was seen, on the cliffs in the side of a small crater about 20 km S of Arusha. On 6 June 1981 six birds were observed sitting and one of them revealed an egg. On 30 May 1982 a similar number of birds was present and one was seen with an egg. These breeding dates are different from those obtained by Houston (1976) in the Serengeti where peak laying is in December/January. The rainfall pattern given by Brown & Britton (1980) shows that there is only a difference of one month in the peak month, with Arusha being the later. The possibility that the eggs observed were added on both occasions seems unlikely but further observations are needed for clarification.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*. A nest was found by helicopter on 1 May 1982 in the grassland dotted with acacia on the Manonga River, roughly due south of Shinyanga; the bird flew off as the helicopter got near. The nest was situated in a rather spindly gall acacia, possibly a whistling thorn *Acacia drepanolobium*, about 5-7 m high. It was a platform of thin sticks and contained a single white egg. This seems to be the first definite record for Tanzania within Brown & Britton's (1980) climatic zone C.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*. Four nests were seen, all with one egg and all on the flat tops of substantial acacia trees. One of the nests was along the Manonga River on 1 May 1982, one near Kiomboi (4.16S, 34.22E) on 3 May 1982, one west of Basotu (4.22S, 35.05E) on 4 May 1982 and one near the north end of Lake Balangida (4.20S, 35.20E) on the same day. Only two records have been reported previously from Region C in Tanzania (Brown & Britton 1980).

Wattled Crane *Grus carunculatus*. Two adults and one chick, which was big enough to half flap, half run along, when we approached, were seen in swamp-land SW of Iringa in southern Tanzania. The grass-swampland in which the birds were seen was not far from some open water which was bordered by a large clump of papyrus. The exact location of the site is not known but it was about 80 km from Iringa. From the air, apart from their size, the most striking features of the adults were their bright white necks and the grey colour of the upper surface of their wings, thereby clearly distinguishing them from Woolly-necked Storks *Ciconia episcopus*. Reference to Brown & Britton (1980) indicates that this is the first breeding record for East Africa. The nearest locality where it is reported to be common and is known to breed is probably western Zambia (Benson et al. 1971).

Crowned Crane *Balearica pavonina*. Five records can be added to those reported by Brown & Britton (1980). One was seen in the Wembere Swamp (4.30S, 34.00E) having two chicks not yet able to fly on 30 April 1978, one with one egg at Mbarali (8.35S, 38.40E) on 23 March 1982, another with one egg in a flattened part of a reed bed along the Great Ruaha River where it runs through the Usangu Flats (8.30S, 34.15E) on 25 March 1982, one with two eggs in a mine-pit at Mwadui (Williamson) Diamond Mine (3.33S, 33.36E) and one with one egg on the banks of the Manonga River 50 km S of Shinyanga. These few records suggest earlier breeding in the south than in central Tanzania.

Red-headed *Quelea erythrops*. Extensive surveys of the swamps east and northeast of Kilosa (6.50S, 36.59E) were made by helicopter. In the *Typha* reed-beds about 15km E of Kilosa, near Msimba Farm, 11 colonies of densely-packed nests of Red-headed *Quelea* were seen from the air between 13 and 19 May 1981. The species identity was verified by entering the edge of the swamp on foot. These colonies covered in total at least 40 ha, and it is likely that about 1.5 million breeding adults were present. The only colony which was approached on foot had young chicks in the nest - determined by the buzz of the juvenile chirping - but no nests could be examined because of the swampy conditions. The birds were reported to be causing damage to cultivated rice.

This record appears to be the first breeding for East Africa (Brown & Britton 1980) and Britton (1980) refers to the species as a non-breeding visitor, especially in the coastal lowlands of Tanzania. These colonies are also quoted by Taylor (1983) from data supplied by J.S.S. Beesley on 22 April 1981.

The nearest other breeding record appears to be from the Kafue Flats in Zambia (Benson et al. 1971).

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NOTES ON BLUE-EARED GLOSSY STARLINGS *LAMPROTORNIS CHALYBÆUS*

AT NAKURU, KENYA

John P. Dittami

In the course of a study on the physiological control of breeding in Blue-eared Glossy Starlings *Lamprotornis chalybæus* at Lake Nakuru National Park (20 000 ha), some interesting findings emerged on the size and structure of the population. These, together with basic data on the timing of breeding and moult, are summarized in this paper.

The Nakuru study lasted for two years, from February 1981 to February 1983, during which over 450 individuals were caught and ringed. Periodic censuses were made of the park population, during which the locations of flocks and individual birds were noted.

## DETERMINATION OF AGE AND SEX

The sex of birds caught and ringed was determined by laparotomy. First year birds were easily recognized by the yellow colour of the inside of their mandibles, which darkened with age and disappeared at about 14 months. The golden eye colour took four to five months to develop fully in young birds. Weights and winglengths of birds in different age and sex categories are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1

*Weights and winglengths of Blue-eared Glossy Starlings  
caught in Lake Nakuru NP*

	Males				Females			
	n	Median	Quartiles	Range	n	Median	Quartiles	Range
Adults								
Weight (g)	191	94	91/97	79-106	109	79	76/83	66-96
Wing (mm)	191	149	147/152	136-157	109	136	134/138	126-146
Juveniles								
Weight (g)	63	90	86/96	76-104	52	78	74/82	60-99
Wing (mm)	63	140	138/142	130-151	52	131	128/135	122-140

Females tended to be smaller than males as has been described by Mackworth-Præd & Grant (1957), and first year birds had shorter wings than adults. Provided age was taken into account, most Blue-eared Glossy Starlings could in fact be sexed with confidence on the basis of weight and winglength.

## NUMBERS, BEHAVIOUR, AGE/SEX RATIOS

As shown in Table 2, there were major fluctuations in numbers, but the total population of Blue-eared Glossy Starlings was at times estimated to be as high as 800 birds. Two distinct classes of birds were recognized during the study. Some pairs remained in territories all the year round; twelve such pairs in all were known in the study area. The majority of birds, however, occupied territories only when breeding, and otherwise formed wandering groups of up to about 300 individuals. The larger groups began to congregate in June, after breeding, and reached a peak in August. Benson & Benson (1977) made the same

TABLE 2

Monthly numbers of Blue-eared Glossy Starlings censused (1982)  
and percentage of juveniles in catches (1981 and 1982  
data combined) in Lake Nakuru NP

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Censused (1982)	150	650	650	400	350	400	350	800	600	200	90	80
No. of birds caught (1981/82)	15	73	49	17	54	28	20	45	71	22	16	18
Percentage of juveniles in catches	53	34	24	35	2	25	30	22	30	50	81	66

observation on the species in Malawi. The structure of the Nakuru flocks was quite flexible, as they appeared to split up into smaller groups and reform from day to day or even within the course of the same day. The flocks often congregated around food sources such as the rubbish pits at the lodges or patches of fruiting trees or bushes.

One surprising finding was that there seemed to be a mass exodus of birds during October-November, and numbers were very low from late November to early January (Table 2). During December of both 1981 and 1982 the overall population was estimated to be less than 80 birds and no large groups were present. Numbers began to build up again from mid January in both years, until at the onset of the long rains they broke up and dispersed in pairs around the park. Where the flocks had gone to from November to January is difficult to say. A few excursions were made in various directions from Nakuru during that period, to the Mau and Kikuyu escarpments, towards Naivasha and Lake Bogoria and to the Kinangop plateau. They produced the same results: only a few birds were seen and no large flocks were found. This would imply that the seasonal exodus of Blue-eared Glossy Starlings was not merely a local Nakuru phenomenon, but a reflection of a more general movement. Similar dry season migrations have been described for the Lesser Blue-eared Glossy Starling *L. chloropterus* (Wells & Walsh 1969) and the Splendid Glossy Starling *L. splendidus* (Elgood, Fry & Dowsett 1973) in Nigeria.

The population which remained at Nakuru during November-January consisted of the few resident pairs which occupied territories all the year round, together with juvenile birds. The contribution of juveniles to total monthly catches increased from 20-30 per cent during June-August (shortly after the main breeding period) to 81 per cent in November and 66 per cent in December (Table 2). The seasonal exodus of young birds was evidently less complete than that of adults. There was a preponderance of males over females amongst the birds caught, which was more marked in adults than in juveniles. This was presumably a reflection of either a higher mortality rate in females or a higher dispersal rate.

#### TIMING OF MOULT AND BREEDING

Forty-eight breeding records (birds feeding nestlings) were collected over the two years (Table 3). The bulk (33) of these were associated with the long rains in April, May or June. There were 12 records from July-August, and one each in September, October, December and January. The nesting site was always in a hole or cavity in a dead tree or in a pole. However, the choice of breeding habitat was seasonally dependent. Thirty-one of the long rains breeding pairs were found in open savanna, and only two pairs in acacia forest. By contrast, breeding from July to January was restricted to acacia forest, and off season breeders apparently utilized an ostensibly more stable environment.

In contrast with other *Lamprotornis* species (Craig 1983), no co-operative breeding was seen in this species.

Breeding was always followed in individuals by a complete moult, beginning two to six weeks after young were hatched. No breeding birds (i.e. feeding at the nest) were found to have any primary moult. This contrasts with reports by Payne (1969) and Foster (1975) but is consistent with many other results (see Britton 1978 for a review). The incidence of post-nuptial flight feather moult was high (over 80 per cent) in adult birds present at Nakuru from July through to November (Table 3). Juveniles went through a complete body moult contemporaneous with the adult moult, but their flight feathers were not replaced until the second year of life.

TABLE 3

Monthly numbers of breeding records and incidence of flight feather moult (1981 and 1982 data combined) of Blue-eared Glossy Starlings in Lake Nakuru NP

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Savanna nests	0	0	0	3	24	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forest nests	1	0	0	0	2	0	8	4	1	1	0	1
Percentage of adults caught showing flight feather moult	5	8	2	0	22	40	80	96	92	80	96	6

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## ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF SPECIES LIKELY TO OCCUR IN

## KENYA BIRD ATLAS SQUARES

D.E. Pomeroy and Adrian D. Lewis

Work on the *Bird atlas for Kenya* is making good progress (Lewis & Pomeroy 1982 a, b, 1983) and, by the end of 1982, a combined total of around 34 000 pre- and post-1970 records had been entered on the draft species maps. The basic unit of mapping is the quarter square degree, i.e. each 1-degree square of latitude and longitude is subdivided into four smaller squares. Kenya is contained within 230 of these quarter square degrees, which we shall refer to here as 'squares', although along the country's borders many of them are only part squares. So far, the square with the highest total, as one would expect, is Nairobi (75b), where 591 species have been recorded. Rather surprisingly, 54 of these species have not been reported since 1970. At the other extreme are 45 squares without a single species recorded.

During 1983 an effort will be made to visit as many as possible of the poorly recorded squares, almost all of them in the north and east of the country. Some areas, however, are too remote or present unpredictable risks and are likely to remain inadequately known. Hence it is of some interest to estimate how many species are to be expected in a particular square, and thus to know how effective the eventual coverage has been.

Several factors are likely to influence the number of species recorded from a particular square. Three important ones are:

- a. the range of habitats within the square
- b. the size of the square
- c. the 'observer effort.'

Some account needs to be taken of each of these if an estimate of species numbers is to be made. We have taken data from 33 well known squares and tried to see how closely the numbers of species recorded from each relates to these factors.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

We have used two simple measures of habitat diversity: altitude range and presence of aquatic habitats.

*Altitude range* the difference in height between the highest and the lowest points is likely to reflect the numbers of habitats within a square, because both temperature and rainfall vary with altitude. Thus a square containing a very small altitude range, as in much of northeastern Kenya, will also contain very few habitats. By contrast, hilly country will be likely to contain a variety. We used altitude range because it can be read from a map. Anna Mutere (pers. comm.) examined 1:250 000 topographical maps of Kenya and abstracted the highest and lowest altitudes in each square, and so obtained the range. The greatest range, incidentally, is 3675 m, for the square which contains Mt Kenya but also descends almost to Embu (63a). Several coastal squares, and two near Lake Victoria, have altitudinal ranges of only a few metres.

*Aquatic habitats* there are approximately 1050 species on the Kenya list, of which about 206 are aquatic, 24 of those being exclusively marine (Pomeroy 1981). Thus squares containing a variety of aquatic habitats would be expected to support more species than 'dry' squares. With the help of Brian Meadows (pers. comm.), we defined seven categories of aquatic habitats, namely oligotrophic lakes, eutrophic lakes, permanent rivers, temporary (but regular)

flood-waters, algal lagoons, soda lakes and marine habitats. We recorded how many of each of these habitat types occurred in every square, although small bodies of water such as ponds were not considered; generally the size limit for inclusion was about 100 ha.

We used two other sources of information:

*The size of the square* this is variable because some squares fall on Kenya's national boundaries, or along the coast, and consequently the area where birds occur is less than that for a full square (this point is still relevant for a square containing a large area of sea, as there are very few pelagic species). However, since even a tenth of a square is more than 300 km<sup>2</sup>, such an area might contain almost as wide a range of habitats as a full square, and in some cases probably does so. We have therefore only excluded part squares which are very small, or which appear to contain a poor range of habitats for their part of Kenya. There are 27 of these.

*Observer effort* obviously one would expect the Nairobi square to have more species than, say, one to the east of Marsabit. Rather few squares have resident observers, but some, e.g. those containing National Parks, receive plenty of visiting bird-watchers. We have assessed observer effort by using a simple scoring system (Table 1).

TABLE 1

*Scoring system used to assess observer effort*

*For the purposes of this assessment, an observer is defined as 'a competent bird-watcher who would be likely to contribute records.' We have split our assessment into resident and visiting observers.*

*observers resident in the squares in the period 1970-1982*

Score	Criteria
5 .. .. .	10 or more active observers for 10 or more years
4 .. .. .	3 to 9 active observers for 10 or more years
3 .. .. .	1 to 2 active observers for 10 or more years
2 .. .. .	1 to 2 active observers for 3 to 9 years
1 .. .. .	1 to 2 active observers for more than 3 months but less than 3 years

*observers visiting the squares in the period 1970-1982  
(duration of visits not defined)*

Score	Criteria
5 .. .. .	an average of 50 or more visitors per year
4 .. .. .	an average of 11 to 49 visitors per year
3 .. .. .	an average of 5 to 10 visitors per year
2 .. .. .	an average of 3 to 4 visitors per year
1 .. .. .	an average of 1 to 2 visitors per year

In addition to the authors, D.J. Pearson (pers. comm.) and D.A. Turner (pers. comm.) made independent estimates of the observer effort scores for the squares used in the analysis; the results were pooled.

### A MODEL FOR ESTIMATING SPECIES NUMBERS

Let us call  $S$  the number of species that might have been recorded in a square between 1970 and 1982; we shall try to describe  $S$  in terms of:

- $r$  - the altitudinal range within the square, in metres;
- $w$  - the number of types of aquatic habitat in the square;
- $e$  - the observer effort, as defined above.

We have assumed that  $r$ ,  $w$  and  $e$  are independent of each other, which is probably true, and also that each is linearly related to  $S$ . This last assumption is justified by plotting  $S$  against each of the three variables separately, and noting that there is a rough linear correlation in each case. Based upon these assumptions, our model is the multiple linear regression, described by the equation:

$$S = a + b_1r + b_2w + b_3e$$

in which  $a$ ,  $b_1$ ,  $b_2$ , and  $b_3$  are all constants.

We took our observed values of  $S$ ,  $r$ ,  $w$  and  $e$  for 33 squares that we believe to have been reasonably well covered, and used them to estimate values of the constants.

### RESULTS

Each of our three variables gave significant values for the coefficient of correlation when compared to the number of species, and hence all were included in the multiple regression analysis. Further, in no case did the use of a logarithmic transformation increase the correlation coefficient. The best fit regression equation, by the method of least squares, is:

$$S = 234.5 + 0.02345r + 22w + 15.9e$$

The equation is statistically highly significant ( $F(3,29) = 18.9$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ); it 'explains' 66.3 per cent of the variance.

### DISCUSSION

The equation that we have given can only be regarded as tentative, but seems sufficiently interesting to be worth reporting; so far as we know, this approach has not been used before. Already there are several features of interest.

The Nairobi square total of 537 post-1970 records is significantly higher than the next largest, which is the square containing Lakes Nakuru and Elmenteita (62a), which has 496 species recorded. This confirms the importance of a concentration of observers, and implies that every other square is seriously under-recorded. This could well be the case; for example, around Bushwhacker's camp (Machakos District), the rate of additional species recorded showed little sign of declining even after an estimated 300 hours of observation (Lewis & Pomeroy 1982a). Most species of birds in the drier areas move extensively when they are not breeding, and whilst it would be an exaggeration to suggest that anything can occur anywhere, there is an element of truth in the notion.

A provisional estimate for the total numbers of records possible for Kenya can be made by using the regression equation to predict the number of species that would have been seen had every square been as intensively watched as Nairobi; (for the present purpose, the 27 small part squares referred to above were assumed to contain only half the number of species of a full square). The approximate total of records obtained in this way is just under 100 000, i.e. three times the present number. There is, of course, no hope of achieving anything like the maximum possible number of records: even in the Nairobi

square, six species were added to the list during 1982. Fortunately, however, the records obtained are already sufficient to show the general patterns for many species (see, for example, Lewis & Pomeroy 1982a, b and Pomeroy, Lewis & Mutere 1982).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Peter Lack, Brian Meadows, Anna Mutere, David Pearson and Don Turner for their assistance, and PL and DP for their comments on a draft of this paper.

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#### CORRECTION

In the paper 'Aberrantly plumaged barbets' (*Scopus* 7: 10-14) Fig. 1 is incorrectly captioned. The drawing is of an aberrantly plumaged Red-faced Barbet.

A MAJOR LESSER KESTREL *FALCO NAUMANNI* ROOST IN KENYA

M.E. Smalley

Lesser Kestrels *Falco naumanni* are small insectivorous falcons whose Palaearctic breeding range extends from Spain and Portugal to about 100°E in the U.S.S.R., with a separated breeding population in northeastern China (Cramp & Simmons 1980). The birds migrate south before the northern winter, many of them passing through East Africa to more southern areas of the continent. None apparently winter in Asia (Vaurie 1965). In Kenya, therefore, the species is chiefly a passage migrant, seen especially during March and April on the return flight north (Britton 1980).

The species is gregarious during breeding, on migration and in the non-breeding quarters (Cramp & Simmons 1980). In southern Africa large numbers of roosts, often containing several thousand birds each, are well known (Siegfried & Skead 1971), and some of the roosts have been used for many years (Kolbe 1972). These traditional roosts are particularly common in the relatively low rainfall grasslands of the Highveld (Siegfried & Skead 1971).

On passage Lesser Kestrels are usually nomadic and, whilst large daytime flocks of feeding and migrating falcons are often seen congregating in areas of abundant food (Cramp & Simmons 1980), huge night-time roosts lasting for several weeks have rarely been described in East Africa.

Between early March and late April 1983 a large Lesser Kestrel roost in Nairobi National Park (1.22S, 36.49E, 1670 m a.s.l.) was studied. This paper describes the numbers of birds attending the roost.

## DESCRIPTION OF ROOST, AND METHODS

The roost was in mature *Acacia kirkii* trees which were scattered either side of a stream along about 1500 m of a shallow valley. The ridges either side of the valley were of open grassland, and the valley itself ran southeast from the roost before opening out on to the Athi Plains on the southern border of the park.

Once a week from 5 March to 30 April the roost was surveyed from a road which ran along one side of the valley, always between 18:00 and 18:30 hrs, and travelling in the same direction. The number of birds in each tree, and in the air during the survey, were counted using 10 x 40 binoculars. Care was taken not to count birds more than once. The number of birds arriving at the roost between 16:00 and darkness was counted on 19, 22 and 23 April. Casual observations were made on other days.

## PATTERN OF ATTENDANCE OF FALCONS AT THE ROOST

The roost was discovered on 5 March and birds were present until 30 April, a period of eight weeks. During that time the numbers of Lesser Kestrels reached two peaks. Firstly during the third week of March, when only Lesser Kestrels were present, and again later, during the second week of April when some Eastern Red-footed Falcons *F. amurensis* joined the roost. Although this species never exceeded 1 per cent of the total roost, both species were then present in the roost until it was finally abandoned between 24 and 30 April (Fig. 1). The weekly survey indicated that the numbers of Lesser Kestrels varied between 60 and 2500. However, by comparing the results of a survey with the total number of birds counted entering the roost (Fig. 1) it became clear that the survey was seriously underestimating the size of the



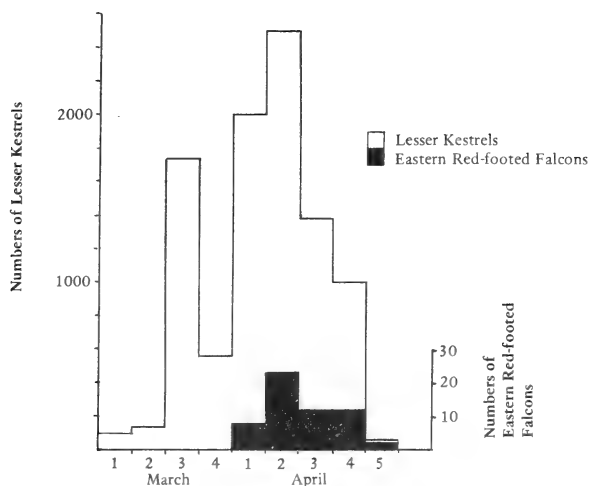


Fig. 1. Number of Lesser Kestrels and Eastern Red-footed Falcons counted each week at a roost in Nairobi NP

roost. This was partly due to the difficulty of counting falcons in the trees, but more importantly because it was shown that by 18:00 hrs only about 37 per cent of the final roost had assembled, and 62 per cent by 18:30 hrs (Smalley in prep.). The actual maximum attendance at the roost was therefore probably about 5000 Lesser Kestrels and up to 50 Eastern Red-footed Falcons.

TABLE 1  
Estimates of the number of falcons in the roost  
from a survey, and from total evening counts

Date	Survey count	evening total count
8 April	2500	about 4500
19 April	1400	2078
22 April	1000	1963
23 April	1000	2069

However, the pattern shown in Fig. 1 is considered to be a good reflection of attendance at the roost since the rate and pattern of entry into the roost was broadly similar on different days (Smalley in prep.).

The number of *Acacia kirkii* trees used by the falcons varied with the size of the roost. The more birds, the more trees. Early in March, and again during the last week of April, the birds settled in only two trees, but not the same two. During the peak attendance 29 trees were used, with up to 156 birds in a single tree. Two or three trees, where the first incoming birds settled, always formed the nucleus of the roost. This nucleus shifted at least once, by 300 m during mid April, for no apparent reason.

## DISCUSSION

Although the roost was not discovered until 5 March, it is quite probable that it had already been in use for some time because Lesser Kestrels were seen frequently in and near Nairobi National Park from January onwards. The prolonged presence of Lesser Kestrels in the central Kenya highlands, lasting about 14 weeks from January to late April was not unusual (Britton 1980), but the large numbers that eventually made use of the roost certainly was. Despite Jackson's (1938) description of large assemblies in the Nairobi area between mid January and March, such numbers have not been recorded for many years. It is thought that, at its peak, about 5000 Lesser Kestrels and up to 50 Eastern Red-footed Falcons were using the roost.

The birds passing through the central highlands stayed longer than in recent years, presumably because there was an abundant food source. Lesser Kestrels require a high concentration of prey on suitable ground (Cramp & Simmons 1980) and such conditions were clearly available on the open grasslands south of Nairobi where daytime feeding falcons were common. Preliminary analysis of pellets collected at the roost shows that only insects were being taken, mainly Orthoptera (Smalley, unpublished data).

Two distinctly separate waves of Lesser Kestrels passed through the roost; I suggest that they came from different wintering populations and that they were destined for different breeding areas. It is suspected that populations from separate parts of the breeding range remain segregated in their winter quarters and that those wintering in southern Africa have originated in Asia (Moreau 1972). Support for this is given by the single ringing recovery of the species affecting the Afrotropical region: a bird ringed in Kazakhstan recovered in Cape Province (Curry-Lindahl 1981).

The first wave of Lesser Kestrels left the Nairobi roost between 19 and 27 March and were probably bound for central European breeding areas, a timing which accords with the peak passage through the Mediterranean basin between mid March and early April (Cramp & Simmons 1980). The bulk of the Eastern Red-footed Falcons leave southern Africa (Transvaal to Malawi) between late February and March (Benson 1951, Siegfried & Skead 1971, Irwin 1981) and very few are seen in the huge area between Malawi and the breeding grounds north and east of the Himalayas (Brown *et al.* 1982). That Eastern Red-footed Falcons were associated with the second wave of Nairobi roosting Lesser Kestrels (but not with the first wave) lends support to the suggestion that these later Lesser Kestrels had wintered in southern Africa and that they were bound for Asiatic breeding grounds where the breeding season is later, in mid May (Cramp & Simmons 1980).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Hector Gomez de Silva, Adrian Lewis and David Pearson for sharing their unpublished observations of the roost.

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## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

## A BIRD CEMETERY IN THE NUBIAN DESERT, SUDAN

Although casualties among Palaearctic migrants crossing the Sahara are a regular and well known feature, the discovery of a concentration of dead and desiccated migrants under an isolated thicket in the Nubian Desert, North Sudan, seems worth reporting in detail.

The birds were found in March 1983 at 17.35N, 34.25E, some 60 km east of Atbara. The thicket was a patch of low thornbush some 6 m across, and was the only substantial piece of vegetation in sight in what was otherwise sandy desert. Well over 100 dried corpses were found beneath this thicket in a good enough state of preservation to permit identification.

Thirty-three species, all Palaearctic migrants, were recognized as follows: Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* 1, Hoopoe *Upupa epops* 1, Eurasian Roller *Coracias garrulus* 1, Eurasian Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* 1, Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* 1, Corncrake *Crex crex* 1, Scops Owl *Otus scops* ssp. (a Palaearctic race) 1, Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* 3, Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* 6, Tawny Pipit *Athus campestris* 1, Tree Pipit *A. trivialis* 9, Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* 9, Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* 1, Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* 1, Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* 9, Pied/Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca/albicollis semitorquata* 1, Sprosser *Luscinia luscinia* 3, Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* 2, Whitethroat *S. communis* 10, Barred Warbler *S. nisoria* 1, Garden Warbler *S. borin* 6, Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinoides* 1, Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* 18, Chiffchaff *P. collybita* 1, Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis* 1, Marsh Warbler *A. palustris* 7, Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus* 1, Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida* 3, Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* 1, Lesser Grey Shrike *L. minor* 1, Red-backed Shrike *L. collurio* 14, Pale Rock Sparrow *Petronia brachydactyla* 1 and Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* 3. This was evidently only a proportion of the birds which had perished in the thicket, for many loose feathers, wings and legs were also scattered around, and rats were discovered to be living there.

To judge from plumage state and characteristics, and moult, the birds had died on autumn migration - presumably some six months earlier. Sandstorms (most prevalent during May-August) would probably have tended to obscure the casualties from earlier years. It could perhaps be assumed that most had entered Africa across the northernmost part of the Red Sea. It was surprising, in view of their prominence on migration on the Red Sea coast (pers. obs.), that no Quails *Coturnix coturnix* or Blackcaps *Sylvia atricapilla* were represented among this collection of birds; the absence of Eurasian Swallows *Hirundo rustica* deserves comment. The Basra Reed Warbler was a particularly interesting find. This species had previously been recorded in the North Sudan only from the Port Sudan and Suakin areas of the Red Sea (Nikolaus 1981, Nikolaus & Pearson 1983), and the desert corpse reported above represents the most northwestern record of the species in Africa.

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## UNUSUAL DECEMBER-JANUARY BREEDING AT THE GARSEN HERONRY, KENYA

The Garsen Heronry, described by North (1956), is situated in *Terminalia* thicket in a large floodpan beside the west bank of the lower Tana, 3 km south of the village of Itsowe and some 15 km south of Garsen, Coast Province. Breeding occurs after seasonal flooding from the river. A lagoon up to a kilometre across is created, and this becomes sealed off and may take several months to dry out. Typically, flooding occurs during April-May as a result of the long rains in central Kenya, and according to local information the colony is commonly active between May and September. Previous accounts of breeding (North 1956, Britton 1974, P.L. Britton pers. comm. and MACC pers. obs.) have all been based on observations between late June and August. The short rains do not usually raise the level of the Tana greatly, and the heronry area typically remains dry from October to March.

After the heaviest October-November rainfall inland for 21 years, the lower Tana valley experienced widespread floods at the end of 1982. We checked the Itsowe area on 12 January 1983, and found the level of the river still very high. The heronry lagoon was flooded to a depth of 1-3 m, and much breeding was in progress. We estimated the size of the colony as at least 4000 pairs. Some 10-20 per cent of the nests were in thicket flooded to 0.5-1 m immediately inside the river bank. The majority, however, were above deeper water in an island of thicket which covered several hectares and extended to a height of 7-8 m. This island was situated about 400 m out in the lagoon, and was approachable only with difficulty by canoe through thick beds of the tall rhizomatous grass *Echinocloa stagnina*.

Most nests were positioned 2-6 m above the water, in the dominant small *Terminalia brevipes* trees or in clumps of *Combretum constrictum* on the periphery of the thicket. Most of the birds breeding were herons - Yellow-billed Egret<sup>1</sup> being the dominant species - followed by Purple Heron, Squacco Heron and Night Heron (see Table 1). The great majority of nests contained chicks, and most of the young Purple Herons and Night Herons were already very large. Other species breeding were Open-billed Stork *Anastomus lamelligerus* (200+ pairs), African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* (100+ pairs), Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (50+ pairs) and Darter *Anhinga rufa* (30+ pairs). Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopica* and Long-tailed Cormorants *Phalacrocorax africanus* were present, but few appeared to have nests.

Itsowe was visited again by MACC and DJP on 20 June 1983. Further flooding had evidently occurred during April-May, and breeding was again in progress, although on a rather smaller scale than in January, and this time it was confined to the main island of thicket. Over 2000 nests were estimated, most with eggs, but some had very small chicks. In contrast to January, the dominant species was the Cattle Egret, and there were very few Purple Herons or Night Herons (Table 1). About 100 pairs each of Sacred Ibis, Darters and Long-tailed Cormorants were nesting, and tens of pairs of African Spoonbills, but there were fewer Glossy Ibis than in January, and no Open-billed Storks were seen with nests.

Earlier estimates of colony size, in June 1974 and July 1981, gave 2000 pairs and 5000+ pairs respectively (Britton 1974, MACC pers. obs.). Activity in January 1983 was clearly comparable. Assuming that these water birds are typically geared to respond to breeding conditions during April-August, and moult presumably about July-November, the ability of so many to take breeding advantage of the November-December floods is surprising. Were the birds involved individuals which had returned to a state of breeding readiness particularly early? We do not know how successful the colony was during June-July 1982, but

<sup>1</sup>Scientific names of herons are given in Table 1

in view of the moderately good 'long' rains in the upper Tana catchment, and unusually heavy coastal rain, we assume that it was active then. Some species were clearly able to utilize the unseasonal breeding opportunity better than others. Purple Herons and Night Herons were well represented at the colony in January 1983, with most young in nests further advanced than those of other species. The very minor involvement of these two species during the second 1983 breeding period would suggest that they had been particularly successful at the beginning of the year; indeed, most adults could already have been in moult by May-June. Cattle Egrets, on the other hand, were surprisingly absent from the colony in January 1983, and this species evidently succeeded in breeding only at the usual time of year.

TABLE 1

*Estimated contribution of various species to the total breeding heron number at the Garsen colony during January and June 1983*

Species	12 January	20 June
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	<1%	None
Purple Heron <i>A. purpurea</i>	25%	<1%
Squacco Heron <i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	15%	5%
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	<1%	70%
Great White Egret <i>Egretta alba</i>	3%	<1%
Black Heron <i>E. ardesiaca</i>	<1%	1%
Little Egret <i>E. garzetta</i>	1%	2%
Yellow-billed Egret <i>E. intermedia</i>	50%	20%
Night Heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	5%	1%
Colony size (pairs of herons)	4000+	2000+

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A MELANISTIC COMMON SNIPE *GALLINAGO GALLINAGO* NEAR NAIROBI:  
AN EXAMPLE OF 'SABINE'S SNIPE'?

In the late afternoon of 30 December 1982 I flushed a very dark snipe *Gallinago* sp. from short grass at Athi River sewage ponds, near Nairobi. The bird was obviously a Common Snipe *G. gallinago*, being of the correct size, shape and proportions, and having the typical fast zigzagging flight, loud harsh call and long bill of that species. A normally coloured *G. gallinago* was also present for comparison. The dark bird was flushed several times, giving excellent views in flight at close range. It was remarkable in having no trace of white anywhere in the plumage, and it appeared almost entirely sooty black. The head and upperparts, including the upperwings, were sooty black, with no pale longitudinal lines on the back which did, however, have some

rufous-brown markings. The flanks were dark-barred on a very dusky ground colour, and the rest of the underparts were sooty-brown to sooty-black, including the entire underwings. The tail was dark, the bill and leg colour were not seen.

Witherby et al. (1943) refer to a well defined and constantly recurring melanistic variety of *G. gallinago*, which is known as Sabine's Snipe. Their description of its plumage, and their illustration, agree in all respects with the Athi River bird, and it would therefore appear that this bird was an example of Sabine's Snipe. This variety has been recorded mainly before 1920 in Ireland and southern England, and rarely from Denmark, the Netherlands, West Germany and France (Cramp & Simmons 1983). Its occurrence in Africa has not apparently been reported previously. The origins of the *G. gallinago* occurring in East Africa are not known, there having been no ringing recoveries or controls for this region (G.C. Backhurst, pers. comm.).

If the Athi River bird was an example of Sabine's Snipe, this suggests either that the bird originated from the known range of the variety in western Europe, and therefore that other *G. gallinago* from this area could also reach East Africa or, more likely, that this variant occurs over a wider range in the Palaearctic than is at present known, including Asiatic areas of the USSR; the lack of ringing recoveries in the Afrotropical region suggests that the *G. gallinago* wintering in this area are largely of Asiatic origins (Cramp & Simmons 1983).

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Scopus 7: 50-51, June 1983

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#### A RECORD OF THE PEARL-BREASTED SWALLOW *HIRUNDO DIMIDIATA* FROM LAKE SUNDU IN SOUTHWESTERN TANZANIA

On 1 December 1980 I was on a foot safari passing by Lake Sundu (8.30S, 31.40E) in southwestern Tanzania. At 10:30 hrs I saw a small swallow, totally white below, fly across the path and out over the edge of the lake. It was noticeably smaller than the Eurasian Swallows *H. rustica* with which it was flying. At first I took it to be a Wire-tailed Swallow *H. smithii* but the lack of a chestnut cap and no white in the tail eliminated this species. The back and rump were metallic blue-black, eliminating the possibility of the Grey-rumped Swallow *H. griseopyga* and the House Martin *Delichon urbica*, the only other similar species found in the area. I identified the bird as a Pearl-breasted Swallow *H. dimidiata*.

There is a single previous record of the species from East Africa, that of a specimen from Malangali, also in southwestern Tanzania (Britton 1980). White (1961) lists its occurrence in southern Tanzania and there is a record from the Kasama area, some 160 km to the south in Zambia (Hall & Moreau 1970). The occurrence of *H. dimidiata* in southwestern Tanzania comes as no surprise but further observations will be necessary to determine its status.

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Scopus 7: 51-52, June 1983

Received 10 May 1983

A RECORD OF THE ANGOLA WHITE-BELLIED SUNBIRD *NECTARINIA OUSTALETI*  
FROM KASESYA IN SOUTHWESTERN TANZANIA

On 27 November 1979 and again on 3 June 1982 I saw a single Angola White-bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia oustaleti* at Kasesya (8.40S, 31.28E), 2 km from the Zambian border. At first I mistook the bird for a Variable Sunbird *N. venusta* but then I noticed that the call was different and, on closer investigation, I found that it had a white not yellow belly. It had a violet reddish coloured band across the chest and lower neck, while the chin and throat were black. Above it was metallic blue with greenish tinges. There were no tufts visible at the side of the chest. The voice is quite different from other sunbirds and, once learned, is a valuable guide to identification.

There is a single record of the species from Tanzania, that of a bird taken at Kigoma on 25 December 1961 (Britton 1980). It occurs 20 km from Kasesya at Mbala (Zambia) in miombo woodland (Benson et al. 1971), the same habitat that I found it in. White (1963) gives the limit of its distribution as the Tanzanian border. In the light of these records, the occurrence of *N. oustaleti* in southwestern Tanzania is not unexpected.

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Scopus 7: 52, June 1983

Received 10 May 1983

NOTICE

THE EAST AFRICAN BIRD REPORT

The 1982 report should be published within the second half of 1983, much later than we had hoped. Although the OS-C must take some of the blame for the late appearance of these annual reports, the main reason behind the delay is that observers are so late in sending in their records. In an attempt to produce the 1983 report in the first half of next year, we are setting a deadline for all records at 29 February 1984. Please help to get the annual reports out in good time.



Any references cited should be listed at the end of the contribution following the form used in this issue. *Names of periodicals MUST be given in full and, in the case of books, the town of publication and the publisher should be given.* A number of works, which are cited frequently, should not be listed under 'References'; the name(s) of the author(s) and date(s) of publication should be given in the text in the normal way.

All contributions should be sent to Dr D.J. Pearson, Department of Biochemistry, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi, Kenya.

#### WORKS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE LISTED UNDER 'REFERENCES'

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#### EAST AFRICAN BIRD REPORT

This forms the fifth issue of *Scopus* and each report covers one calendar year. Records of Afrotropical Region (i.e. Ethiopian Region and Malagasy Sub-Region) and Oceanic birds should be sent to D.A. Turner [tel. 48772], Box 48019, Nairobi; records of Palaearctic Region birds to D.J. Pearson [tel. 47041], Box 30197, Nairobi. Records should be sent in early in the new year to ensure the speedy production of the Bird Report. Reports of rare birds may be phoned through to any OS-C member.

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# ***SCOPUS***

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*Edited by*  
Graeme Backhurst



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# SCOPUS

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*Scopus* welcomes original contributions in English on all aspects of the ornithology of eastern Africa. Contributions will be assessed by the members of the OS-C and/or by independent referees. The material published in *Scopus* is divided into 'papers' and 'short communications', the latter will usually be less than two pages in length. 'Papers' should, where possible, be written in the third person; 'short communications' may be written in either the first or third person. Authors of 'papers' are entitled to five copies of their contribution *gratis*. Extra copies, which will be supplied at cost, *must* be ordered when the MS is submitted.

Contributions should be typed in 1½ or double spacing on one side of the paper only, with wide margins all round, and should be submitted in duplicate. Exceptionally, clear hand-written MSS will be considered but these too should be sent in duplicate. Both English and scientific names of birds should be given when the species is first mentioned, thereafter only one should be used. English and scientific names should be those of *Birds of East Africa* unless the species does not occur in that work.

Tables, which should be numbered, *should appear in the typescript, NOT grouped on separate sheets at the end*. Metric units should be used.

Illustrations should be on good quality white paper, bristol board or tracing material, in line, and should not be larger than 19 x 23 cm. Lettering (in black) will be the responsibility of the author and should be done neatly in Letraset (or similar), no larger than 14 point (3.9 mm). Each illustration should be numbered (Fig. 1, etc.) and be provided with a legend typed on a separate sheet of paper. Photographs will also be considered.

Any references cited should be listed at the end of the contribution following the form used in this issue. *Names of periodicals MUST be given in full and,*

*Continued inside back cover*



## MEROPIDAE: Bee-eaters

*Merops albicollis* ND: 100+ south end Lake Natron (T) 8-9 Jun (JSSB).  
Migrants from north absent at this time, but some birds appear to be resident near Magadi.

*Merops hirundineus* Swallow-tailed Bee-eater R: singles Tatanda (T) 12 May (DCM) and Ruaha NP (T) 7 Aug and 10 Oct (AJB, EMB).

*Merops nubicus* Carmine Bee-eater R: 25-30 Dar es Salaam 9 May (PHs) was large party so far south. E: inland, 2 at Voi 8 Apr (MEJG).

## PHOENICULIDAE: Wood Hoopoes

*Phoeniculus purpureus* Green Wood Hoopoe E: 1 Lutembe (U) 25 Sep (MJC) was first record for Entebbe Peninsular.

## BUCEROTIDAE: Hornbills

*Bucanistes bucinator* Trumpeter Hornbill E: 1 Karura forest, Nairobi, 6 Oct (ADL).

## CAPITONIDAE: Barbets

*Lybius frontatus* Miombo Pied Barbet S(B): present throughout year Tatanda, southern Tanzania (DCM).

*Lybius minor* Black-headed Barbet R: present Tatanda (T) May-Jun (DCM).

*Lybius rubrifacies* Red-faced Barbet R: 1 nr Bukoba 10 Feb (NEB) was first Tanzanian record for many years.

## INDICATORIDAE: Honeyguides

*Indicator exilis* Least Honeyguide R: singles Kakamega 31 Oct and 19 Nov and Kericho 21 Nov (DAT, DEW).

*Indicator meliphilus* Pallid Honeyguide R: 1 Pugu Hills (T) 9 May (PHs).

*Prodotiscus zambesiae* Eastern Honeybird E: 1 Tatanda (T) 28 Feb (DCM).

## PICIDAE: Woodpeckers and Wrynecks

*Picoides obsoletus* Brown-backed Woodpecker R: only records were from Nairobi 21 Jan and 22 Aug (a pair) and Mt Elgon Lodge 15 Nov (MES, DAT, DEW).

## EURYLAIMIDAE: Broadbills

*Smithornis capensis* African Broadbill R: records from Pugu Hills (T) Jan, Jun, Jul and Nov (NEB, KH).

## PITTIDAE: Pittas

*Pitta angolensis* African Pitta E: singles attracted to lights on nights of dense fog at Mufindi tea factory on 24 Apr, 13 May and 14 and 19 Nov, with 5 on 17 Nov (AJB, EMB).

## ALAUDIDAE: Larks

*Chersomanes albofasciata* Spike-heeled Lark R: party of 8 in usual site north of Arusha 12 Dec (JSSB).

*Mirafraga cantillans* Singing Bush Lark M: juv caught at night Ngulia Lodge 17 Nov (DJP).

*Mirafraga pulpa* Friedmann's Bush Lark S(B): 1 nr Lake Jipe, Tsavo W NP 15 Aug (DAT).

## HIRUNDINIDAE: Swallows and Martins

*Hirundo aethiopica* Ethiopian Swallow E: 2 Mikumi NP (T) 20 Jul (PHs).

*Hirundo atrocaerulea* Blue Swallow R: in southern Tanzania, few Mufindi area 5 Mar (NEB) and several Njombe Nov-Dec (AJB, EMB).

# *SCOPUS*

## EDITORIAL

Issues of *Scopus* are sometimes late in appearing, but none has ever been as late as this one. We are extremely sorry for this delay but, at the same time, thank our subscribers for their patience and understanding.

The present issue is a double one; this was caused partly by the delay which occurred in organizing the material for the original September number, and also because it was considered desirable to present Dr John Ash's paper (pp. 54-79) in one complete part instead of in the four separate ones as envisaged by the author.

This move represents a change in editorial policy by the OS-C: until now there has been an unwritten law limiting the length of papers in *Scopus*. The OS-C has now decided that longer papers may indeed appear and that issues may be combined, as long as the total number of pages produced each year remains more or less the same.

We hope you will find this policy acceptable but, if not, that you will write to us with your views since our aim is to produce the kind of journal that you, our subscribers, want.

# OVER FIFTY ADDITIONS OF BIRDS TO THE SOMALIA LIST INCLUDING TWO HYBRIDS, TOGETHER WITH NOTES FROM ETHIOPIA AND KENYA

J.S. Ash

Somalia is one of the lesser, if not the least, ornithologically well known countries in Africa. The maps in Hall & Moreau (1970) and Snow (1978) show the large gaps in the country for the distribution of many species of birds which might be expected, and it is not surprising, therefore, that many previously unrecorded species have now been found. The two main works covering the country are Archer & Godman (1937, 1961) for the north (ex-British Somaliland), and Moltoni & Ruscone (1940-1944) for the south (ex-Italian Somaliland). In spite of these comprehensive treatises, Baird (1979) was able to add 28 species not recorded by Archer & Godman from the north, and in a few days in May 1979 I found four more not included in either publication; clearly there is scope for much more basic distribution survey work.

Although a number of collecting expeditions passed through the north of the country they were mainly *en route* to Ethiopia, and Archer & Godman's information is actually largely restricted to a rather small part of ex-British Somaliland. From the south Moltoni & Ruscone, for the greater part, only refer to selected localities from which birds had been collected. Most of the rather sparse literature on Somalia refers to collected birds, and there are remarkably few data based on field observations, especially compared with Kenya, and even Ethiopia.

The first check-list for the birds of Somalia has been completed (Ash & Miskell 1983), and one of the objects of the present paper is to substantiate species in the check-list for which there are no earlier published records. It is referred to throughout the present paper as 'the List'.

Some of the observations recorded below have been made in the course of fieldwork connected with investigations into Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*. At times I have been accompanied by other observers, including Dr R.L. Bruggers, Dr C.C.H. Elliott, J. Haslam, J.E. Miskell, A.A. Murshid, and Dr P. Ward. In particular, on several long survey trips, I was accompanied by AAM to the Juba River on 2-14 October 1978, to northwest Somalia by AAM and JEM 27 April to 25 May 1979, to south Somalia by JEM 13 September to 8 October 1979, to the lower Shebelle and Juba River by JEM 18-29 February 1980, and to northeast Somalia by JEM 15 April to 16 May 1980. Otherwise most observations were confined to an area within about 100 km of Mogadishu. The period covered is from my arrival in Somalia on 13 August 1978 until December 1981, except for absences of about one month in November/December 1979, for most of August to November 1980, for six weeks in August/September 1981, and for several other shorter periods.

Of the 52 birds now considered, 24 are Palaearctic migrants, 16 are Afro-tropical species, three belong to one or other or possibly both of these categories, four are Antarctic or from far southern seas, three are from tropical seas, and two are hybrids. Of particular interest are: a wreck of Dove Prions *Pachyptila d. desolata*, a Kerguelen Petrel *Pterodroma brevirostris*, four Red-necked Stints *Calidris ruficollis*, a Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*, Arctic Terns *Sterna paradisaea*, and a Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. Fifteen of the species records are supported by specimens deposited in the Smithsonian Institution and British Museum.

Order and nomenclature follow that of the List.



*Dove Prion Pachyptila desolata desolata*

The occurrence of this species along the coast of Somalia in August 1979 provides the first records for Somalia, which is far to the north of its normal range, and may be the first to be found north of the equator. A total of c. 12 birds was involved, of which four were found dead, in the period 12-23 August 1979. Because of the geographical site of this 'wreck' and the difficulties experienced in identification, in spite of having Slater (1971) and Tuck & Heinzel (1978) for reference, each bird is recorded here. Only the complete specimen could definitely be attributed to this species (see below), and the others can only be assumed to be the same.

The first bird was a complete dead one found on the previous high tide-line on a beach at 1.58N, 45.14E near Gezira at 12 km southwest of Mogadishu, at 17:00 on 12 August 1979. The upper and lower mandibles were dark blue-black, except for a black mid-dorsal ridge. The measurements of the wing as 190 mm, bill 30 mm, bill width 16 mm, and bill width:length ratio at 1.9 (using Slater's (1971) method), agreed with *P. salvini* based on these four parameters cited by him. However, it also agreed with *P. desolata* on all measurements except bill width, and in addition lacked the mandibular lamellae which he states are present in *salvini*, but absent in *desolata*. Tuck & Heinzel extend the bill width of *desolata* to 15 mm, but their figure for bill length at 38 mm (surely an error) and bill width:length ratio at 2.5 - 3.0 is at complete variance with Slater. In fact, neither work enabled me to identify this bird with certainty.

On 15 August, parts of two dead prions were found on another beach about 1 km southwest of the first site: a) two wings with some body feathers and the tail; wing-lengths were 181 and 185 mm and tail 89 mm. b) a tail and one leg attached, to which some flesh adhered indicating that the bird had died recently. Tail 87 mm, tarsus 32 mm.

On 17 August four prions flew south at Hal Hambo, of which two were close inshore. Through a mounted telescope the distinctive tail and wing patterns could be seen well, but their erratic flight was the most outstanding characteristic, being unlike any other seabird I know: rapid, but suddenly stopping and turning or twisting and diving down or sideways, and occasionally zig-zagging.

On 22 August from a headland 3 km southwest of Gezira one bird flew north close inshore, followed later in the afternoon by one more to the north and two to the south, but much further out to sea. On 23 August the remains of a bird consisting of both wings, the sternum and pelvis and both legs were found on a beach at Mallable. Wing-lengths 189 and 192 mm, tarsi 33 and 33.5 mm.

Thus, assuming that all the sight observations referred to different birds, the 12 birds involved occurred along 73 km of coastline. During the intervening days searches were made along many kilometres of this stretch of shore-line, and the fact that three were found in one kilometre near Gezira, where four of the live birds were seen, suggests that this was the main focus of the wreck. Generally any dead bird washed ashore in Somalia is soon devoured by ghost crabs *Ocype* sp., so that possibly many other individuals were involved.

Of the six species of *Pachyptila* recognized, *desolata* breeds in the sub-antarctic zone, in the Antarctic Peninsular, South Georgia, Kerguelen, Heard, Macquarie and Auckland Islands, and ranges north in the southern oceans as far as 35S (Tuck & Heinzel 1978).

Later, together with Dr G.E. Watson, I was able to compare the Somalia material with specimens in the Smithsonian Institution, but we were still unable to identify them positively. Fortunately soon afterwards Dr C. Jouanin kindly examined the specimens with Watson and diagnosed them as examples of the Kerguelen nominate race (which was not represented in the Smithsonian

collection). The Registration Numbers of the four specimens are 555603-5 and 506069.

Kerguelen Petrel *Pterodroma brevirostris*

The wings and body of a bird without a head or legs were found, after having been partly eaten by a scavenger, on a beach at Mallable on 20 September 1978. I confirmed its identification with Dr Storrs Olson as *P. brevirostris* from a wing and a part-wing (lengths 244 and 247 mm) at the Smithsonian Institution, where it is deposited (Registration Number 582473). This is a remarkable occurrence of vagrancy for a species occurring between about 40 and 60S in the South Atlantic and south Indian Oceans, and would appear to be the first record from anywhere in Africa.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*

I have spent many puzzling hours looking at shearwaters at various points along the coast of Somalia. After much helpful correspondence with Dr W.R.P. Bourne, a perusal of the literature, and examination of skins, I now claim with reasonable confidence that one species of dark shearwater is *Puffinus pacificus*. As this has not been recorded previously from Somalia's inshore waters, I list all the records, and add some field notes which may help in its identification elsewhere.

1. Between Mait and Mait Island, in the Gulf of Aden, three were seen on 20 May 1979.
2. One flew north on 16 April 1980 42 km north of Adale.
3. About 40 were seen in Hafun Bay, off Dante, 27-29 April 1980.
4. At Gezira one flew north on 7 June 1980 and one flew south there on 15 July 1980.
5. In 1981 in the Gezira/Mogadishu area 12 were seen on 11 days: on 3, 6, 7, 11, 18 and 19 April, 4 and 5 May and 18 and 27 November.

Description: there was variation from bird to bird; general colour brown, sometimes looking sooty-brown and almost black, but at other times appearing as 'Bonxie' (*Catharacta skua*) brown. Size large, much larger than a Noddy *Anous stolidus*, and often not looking much like a shearwater at all, due to curved wings, and more time spent in flapping than in gliding flight. Notes on one bird indicated a two-tone effect on the upper wings, another showed a pale brown line across the upper surface of the wings at the edge of the wing coverts. All the other birds appeared uniformly coloured above and below, except for one which had paler and rather yellowish-brown underparts. The legs were difficult to see, even at close range: one bird's legs were described as "not black", another as "dull mustard", and a third as "pale" (and this also had a pale bill). None had a heavy pale bill; one watched on the sea through a telescope had a slender darkish bill, not black, but either grey or blue, with probably a darker tip, and it was shorter than the head. One with a pale bill, but definitely not heavy, also had pale legs. All birds had a rather long-tailed appearance, but on only two occasions did they look wedge-shaped, seen when feeding birds banked suddenly. Tails were slightly rounded at the end and almost parallel-sided in flight. The most noticeable feature in flight was their curved wings, with the highest point, at the carpal joint, being above the level of the back.

Habits: their flight generally was heavy and rather laboured, and certainly not 'graceful', with much flapping flight and relatively little gliding. At Hafun they spent much time sitting on the sea, when one was once seen to pick an object off the surface. They often came close inshore, even over breaking waves on the shore itself. One bird sitting on the sea amongst breaking waves merely jumped over each one as it approached without opening its wings and landed on the water on the other side. Occasionally as birds came close in-

shore over breaking waves, they would slow down, heading into the wind and paddle their feet along the surface in the manner of storm-petrels.

Tuck & Heinzel (1978) show the distribution of this species as extending throughout the Indian Ocean, but there are no certain records from Kenya (Britton 1980), and it is unknown from the Ethiopian Red Sea coast. Other Procelariidae seen off the Somalia coast in 1979-1981 include Persian Gulf Shearwaters *Puffinus lherminieri persicus* (identification supported by a specimen) in thousands off northeast Somalia in April and May, and a few other *lherminieri* in the Mogadishu area in March-August and November; Jouanin's Petrel *Bulweria fallax*, several off Mait in the Gulf of Aden in May, and off Gezira in July in three years.

To indicate the variety of shearwaters and petrels occurring along the Somalia coast, five or six other species have been seen in addition to those listed above. Some of these have been seen several times, but they have not been identified; details are as follows:

1. Large species, very easy flapping and shearing flight, snowy white below including flanks (wing tips not discernible); grey-brown above, but not uniform, being flecked or mottled with whitish. Seen as follows: Gezira, 5 June and 15 July 1980; Mogadishu, 16 July 1980; all single birds flying south. Gezira, 25 October 1980, three. Possibly Cory's or White-faced Shearwaters *Calonectris diomedea* or *leucomelas*.

2. Large all-dark birds with wing-span greater than the Common Noddy *Anous stolidus*; powerful flight with much shearing, often rising high above the sea. Seen as follows: Gezira, singles flew south on 17 and 24 May 1980, and flying north on 13 July 1980; 14 flew south singly on four days, 6 May to 20 June 1981. Possibly Great-winged Petrel, Reunion Petrel or Trinitade Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*, *P. aterrima* or *P. arminjoniana*.

3. Smaller than 2. above, size of Common Noddy or smaller; all dark. Seen as follows: Hafun, c. 10, 27 April 1979; Gezira, one flew north, 15 July 1980; Mogadishu, one flew south, 16 July 1980; Gezira, two on 31 March and one on 1 July 1981 flew south. Possibly a dark *Pterodroma*.

4. Larger than Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*, dark above and white below, rather heavy flaps interspersed with short glides close to the surface of the sea. Seen as follows: Mallable, one feeding, 10 November 1978; Gezira, singles flew south on 6 August 1980 and 28 March 1981. They reminded me of Barau's Petrel *Pterodroma barau*, but were too distant for identification.

#### Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

I have two specimens and one sight record of this species from Somalia. The first was a recently dead bird, already partly eaten by crabs, on the new tide line at Gezira on 31 May 1979. Its red feet enabled it to be identified immediately as this species, an identification that I was able to confirm at the Smithsonian Institution (Registration Number 555606).

The second record was provided by a skeleton found on sand dunes just above high water mark at Hal Hambo on 10 October 1979. It was identified at the Smithsonian Institution by Dr Storrs Olson (Registration Number 555607).

On 19 November 1981 an intermediate phase bird was watched feeding with terns off Gezira. It was pale brown above with dark wing tips and near white rump; very dark underwings; white belly, and remainder of underparts a paler brown than the mantle.

There are only two previous records for this species from African coastal waters, both in Kenya (Britton 1980).

Greater Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Curiously there are no previous certain records for this species in Somalia. A reference in Oustalet (1882) is queried by Moltoni (1936) as "Somalia sett. italiana?" Three coastal localities in Archer & Godman (1937), Saad Din, Saba Wanak and Somalia coast (the last possibly referring to Oustalet's record), must remain in doubt owing to possible confusion with, and the more likely occurrence of, Socotran Cormorants *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis* at these localities. In 1978-1979 the species was found breeding in two localities in southern Somalia where it is locally common but sporadic.

At Genale in 1978 I saw c. 10 on 21 August, c.100 at a communal riverside roost on 2 October, and c.50 breeding pairs on 9 November. - most of these were building in trees, but a few were incubating. At 13km south of the equator on the Gelib to Kismayu road a few birds were on nests on 6 October 1978. In 1979 there were one to four birds at Dannow on 20 April, 1 July and 26 October, one at 14km northeast of Gelib on 14 September, and 110 on a lakeshore (Rad-idi) at 13km south of Dujuma on 2 October. In 1980 there are six records of one to nine birds in January, February and August at Dannow and Far Sarei along the lower Shebelle river. Possibly Greater Cormorants are only irregular breeding visitors to southern Somalia when large tracts of riverine land are inundated following the big rains, for I have no more records after August 1980.

The distribution map in Snow (1978) shows the whole of the Horn of Africa east of the rift valley devoid of records of this species except for my two isolated records along the Ethiopian Webi Shebelle: one near Mustahil on 11 September 1971 and, two days later, 20 at Callafo - close to the time when the species breeds in Somalia. The same map shows the species absent from Kenya north of the Tana River.

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*

There is not a single record for this species for the whole of the Horn of Africa north of the equator and east of the rift valley, although to the west and further south of these limits it is well known. Two adults with immaculate slate-coloured upperparts and heavily streaked underparts were watched on 25 May 1979, and presumably the same two again on 28th, on flooded land at 9km south of Jiohar. They were disturbed by the roadside and flew up on to exposed perches on *Balanites* bushes only 15m away, where one bird was watched as it called with an apparently unrecorded whistling note reminiscent of a Rosy-patched Shrike *Rhodophoneus cruentus*. Following this observation 30 more birds, both immatures and adults, were seen on dates between 21 August and 26 October at Afgoi, Balad, Jiohar, 10 and 33km south of Kolbio, Dannow, Kurtonwarey, and 21km north of Ras Kiamboni, so that the species is apparently quite common in southern Somalia, and may be an isolated population.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

There are no certain previous records of Purple Herons in Somalia, but nowadays it is not uncommon. Heuglin (1869-1874) records it from the Somalia coast, but Moltoni (1936) queries this - perhaps because Heuglin attributed some stretches of coast (notably Djibouti) to Somalia that no longer fall within its present-day boundaries. Archer & Godman (1937) refer to a bird, possibly this species, at Sabawanak. I have records for 74 birds between 4 October 1978 and 20 November 1981, and possibly most of these were Palaearctic migrants. There is no evidence that African birds breed in Somalia, but two birds on 1 July suggest that they may. Most were seen at Kurtonwarey, 10+ on 8 October 1981, and at Dannow, another very suitable breeding site with large *Typha* beds, where the maximum numbers were eight on 4 December 1978,

nine on 26 October 1979, and 12, apparently all adults, on 13 August 1980. Other sites, at which there were one to three birds, included Dhaay Tubako, Ionte, Gelib, Jiohar, Gezira and Audegle; and one which was very likely to have been a Palaearctic migrant was on top of a palm tree at dawn at Isku-shuban in north Somalia on 30 April 1980.

The species is fairly common and widespread in Ethiopia west of, and within, the rift valley, but I have only three records from east of this line: one near Harar on 7 and 18 November 1969, and six near Mustahil on the Webi Shebelle, not far from the Somalia border, on 11 September 1971. It is widespread in Kenya (Britton 1980).

#### Madagascar Squacco Heron *Ardeola idae*

This is not an unexpected species in Somalia for it is now established as a fairly common, albeit probably frequently overlooked, non-breeding visitor to Kenya (Britton 1980), where I have seen up to 19 in one place. In non-breeding plumage they may be difficult to separate from Squacco Herons *Ardeola ralloides*, if alone, but their larger size combined with much heavier bill and broader streaking on the head and neck should distinguish most individuals. When seen alongside each other in the field there is no difficulty in separation. I saw two at close range resting in an acacia in flooded land at 12 km south of Jiohar on 28 May 1979 and another in an irrigation channel at Libsoma on 21 August 1979. *A. ralloides* has only been recorded previously on seven occasions in Somalia (Erlanger 1904-1907, Patrizi 1935, Moltoni 1936, Baird 1979), in the period 1901-1958, but nowadays the species is common and widespread: I have over 130 records during 1978 to 1981 in all months except June, between Ras Kiamboni in the south and Hargeisa in the north.

#### Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*

There is only one previous occurrence of this species in the whole of the Horn of Africa (Snow 1978), 25 birds which I saw between Mustahil and Callafo along the Webi Shebelle, in Ethiopia, on 11 September 1971. Twelve further records, this time in Somalia, indicate that the bird is not unusual in this area. There were two at Farkero on 8 November 1978 feeding in flooded grassland with their characteristic 'umbrella' technique. On 20 April 1979, two to five birds (two, two and one seen in the space of ½ h) flew over marshland at Dannow and there were a further two there on 28 December 1979; there were five at Far Sarei on 10 January 1980 (Dr C.C.H. Elliott and J.E. Miskell); nine at Far Sarei on 20 February 1980, and on 22 February 1980, four, 18 and two at Lake Gudan, Billakh and Dhaay Tubako respectively. Of particular interest are records on the north coast of single birds at El Dario lagoon, Habo, with 13 African Reef Herons *Egretta gularis*, and flying over mangroves at Alula, both on 2 May 1980. There were two at Jiohar on 30 October 1981 (J.E. Miskell). Lastly, a single bird was seen on many occasions consorting with African Reef Herons along the shore in the Mogadishu/Gezira area between 19 October and 18 November 1981.

#### Pintail *Anas acuta*

Except for the Garganey *Anas querquedula*, remarkably few Palaearctic ducks have been recorded in Somalia, and I am unable to trace any for the present species in the literature. I saw a female at Galboy with a flock of 50 Egyptian Geese *Alopochen aegyptiacus* on 7 December 1978. In the winter of 1979/1980 a large influx occurred in parts of the Webi Shebelle and Juba valleys. There were c. 90 on irrigated rice at Libsoma on 20 December, c. 20 on 28 December and four on 16 January. At Dannow on 28 December there were at least 600, and still 400+ on 3 and 4 February and c. 100 on 19 February. There were only two to four on three days at Libsoma in January, but elsewhere rather more, with 73

at Dhaay Tubako on 22 February, three at Shonde on 26 February and 30 at Lake Radidi on 27 February. There is a specimen in the Nairobi Museum collected by M.E.W. North at Eil on 22 December 1944. R.G. Allan informs me that he saw singles at Lake Sinadogo on 27 October 1971 and 6 February 1972. There are large areas of suitable habitat in the Webi Shebelle and Juba river valleys, so that from their scarcity in most years one must conclude that only small numbers of Palaearctic waterfowl visit the country. It is of interest that the large influx coincided with local conditions which were drier than usual.

#### Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

It is surprising that there are no previous records of this species from Somalia, for nowadays the species is obviously fairly common and of regular occurrence. The first one I saw was at Mallable on 3 November 1978 hunting over beach-head *Atriplex*, following which 51 others have been seen in all months on dates between 25 August and 1 April, at localities which include Dannow, Hawaala Buray, Libsoma, Far Sarei, Dhaay Tubako, Gezira, sites between Afgoi and Shalambot and at 35 km south of Gelib. I found it to be common and widespread in Ethiopia on dates between 22 September and 9 May, and I also had two records in June, and it is a reasonably common winter visitor to Kenya (Britton 1980).

#### African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus*

Three harriers seen together with an example of the Eurasian Marsh Harrier on 2 March 1979 at Dannow can only have been this species. They were flying about over dense *Typha* beds in typical harrier fashion, but were obviously smaller than the *aeruginosus*, and in general appeared dark all over without any white or buff on the rump, head or shoulders, and one at least showed palish bases to the underwing primaries. There was one at the same place on 16 March 1979, and another at Far Sarei on 20 February 1980. Presumably the non-migratory *ranivorus* will be found eventually breeding in southern Somalia, but at present these new records constitute an interesting extension of range beyond their nearest sites in Kenya (Snow 1978), and it is still not known from Ethiopia.

#### Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

I watched two sub-adults, probably both females, at point-blank range on 30 December 1978 at Hawaala Buray. They were sitting in an acacia tree in a large *quelea* colony and were apparently gorged on the huge numbers of newly fledged *Quelea quelea*. Detailed notes were taken, of which the following excerpts rule out all other species with which they might have been confused (both *Accipiter* and *Melierax* spp.): yellow eyes and legs; finely barred on upper breast and strongly so below this with broad dark bars; dark Vs on thighs; no chestnut on underparts; no white on upper tail. The heavily barred underparts suggested Levant Sparrowhawk *A. brevipes*, but the yellow iris rules out this species. Backhurst, Britton & Mann (1973) could find only five records from Kenya for *A. nisus*. In Ethiopia, Urban & Brown (1971) state that it is "uncommon to rare throughout", although I have been able to trace only five records, all in the Rift Valley (Issel 1872, Salvadori 1884, Erlanger 1904, Beals 1966). In addition, I saw one at Aseita on 11 and 12 December 1975, and found the dried remains (specimen now in the Smithsonian Institution, Registration Number 569282) of what was probably the same bird, an adult female, at the same place on 17 February 1976.

#### Steppe Buzzard *Buteo buteo vulpinus*

I collected a specimen of a male *B. b. vulpinus* found freshly dead following a spraying operation on 10 January 1979 at Hawaala Buray, where it was

presumably overwintering. It is a large bird with wing 402mm and is now in the Smithsonian Institution (Registration Number 571252). It is odd that there are no other records from Somalia for it is a common overwintering and passage migrant in Ethiopia, although mostly in the rift valley and in the region further west (pers. obs.). Moreau (1972) comments that "their apparent absence from Somaliland may be because that country is too arid." It is also a widespread passage migrant and winter visitor to Kenya, but again mainly in the west (Britton 1980). Dr G.E. Watson kindly confirmed the subspecific identification.

#### Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Booted Eagles are fairly common in southern Somalia, so it is surprising that it has not been recorded previously. I saw the first, a pale phase adult, on 7 November 1978 at Moccoidumis, and subsequently have seen at least 46 more, of which 22 were pale phase adults. All localities are in the south and include Bardid, Bur Heybo, Shalambot, Hawaala Buray, Afgoi, Uarmahan, six sites between Afgoi and Shalambot, 5 and 13km south of Jiohar, Hal Hambo, Dannow, Lake Gudan, Fanole, Lake Radidi, Uar Uorba, Libsoma and Mogadishu. Extreme dates are 12 October and 20 April, with birds being seen in every month between. Pale phase adults are unmistakable, even though they bear a superficial resemblance to adult Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus*, but the identification of dark birds is more difficult owing to their possible confusion with other small dark African eagles. Most of the dark birds, possibly immatures, have shown a pale brownish diagonal band on the upper wing along the trailing edge of the wing coverts together with a similarly coloured crescentic rump patch. A few of these dark birds also have almost clear white shoulder patches at the base of the wing - a character which is given for Ayres' Hawk Eagle *H. dubius* by Brown & Amadon (1968), but is clearly not diagnostic for that species (vide Porter et al. 1978). This species is commoner overwintering in eastern Africa than the earlier records indicate. Moreau (1972) states: "Southwards through eastern Africa it has been listed all the way to the Eastern Cape but in none of the territories is it represented by more than two records or localities." From 1969 to 1977 I saw 16 birds in Ethiopia in all months between 23 October and 13 March, but with the inclusion of brown birds, not positively identified as *pennatus*, this total would be boosted considerably. It has become recognized as a common visitor to Kenya only since 1971, prior to which few had been identified (EANHS, OSC 1978, Britton 1980). This bird is generally regarded as being a woodland species, and it is of course a tree-nester, but in its winter quarters in Somalia it is typically a bird of open country, even at times over coastal dunes and lagoons. Half the above-mentioned Ethiopian records, and all those from Somalia, were seen in mostly very arid open country with but few trees, and I have evidence for migration over the extremely arid Danakil desert. Only one of them was in a truly forested area.

#### Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*

This species is probably fairly common in the forested region of southern Somalia, and may be expected to be so in similar habitat across the border in Kenya. I had close views of birds in flight and at rest on the Kenya/Somalia border track at 20, 32, 38 and 40 km south of Kolbio on, respectively, 18, 19, 24 and 25 September 1979. Outside this area there was another on 1 October 1979 at Marerei on the lower Juba. The first two birds were in circling display flights above the forest in the early mornings, when their clear calls puuuuuuu - pu - pu - pu..... carried far. Probably they breed there, as well as at Marerei where the habitat is still suitable, although considerably reduced.

Cuckoo Hawks occur nearby to the south in coastal Kenya (*A. c. verreauxi*), but to the west there is a wide gap in their range before they are met with again in southwestern Ethiopia. These westerly birds are also *verreauxi*, confirmed by specimens I collected, and not nominate as suspected earlier by Urban & Brown (1971).

Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera*

An immature bird at Afgoi was first seen on 21 January 1980 flying rapidly amongst a group of large trees round a pool, apparently mobbing a Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* perched in one of them. In several brief views its pale blue-grey upperparts and paler rump were seen. There was no red on the head or neck, and its dark eye and moustachial streak contrasted with its whitish cheeks; the centre of the underparts was not seen, but the pale reddish brown (or bright buff) flanks were conspicuous. It was present again at the same place on 26 January and 7 and 17 February.

I am familiar with this species elsewhere in Africa and as a breeding bird in western Ethiopia, but am unable to trace any previous record in Somalia, or even in Ethiopia east of the rift valley (*contra* Brown & Amadon 1968). In Kenya it is known as near to southern Somalia as the Tana River (Snow 1978, Britton 1980).

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*

Although recognized as a migrant this species is not recorded within the Somali arid zone by Snow (1978). One, with poorly developed knobs, was present at Dannow, not much above sea-level, on 16 March 1979. There was another at Libsoma on 25 and 28 December 1979. These are probably vagrants in Somalia, although J.E. Miskell informs me that the bird is frequently present on pans at Wajir in the arid zone of northeast Kenya. It is a very common bird in Ethiopia, where it is associated with highland waters up to 3300 m, and in numbers up to 10 000 together (on lakes near Harar, pers. obs.).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

A single bird at Libsoma on 25 December 1979, and two at the same place on 28th, were feeding in a pool resulting from an irrigated rice crop. Later there were single birds at Dannow on 4 and 19 February and at 38 km south of Afgoi on 15 March 1980, and two more at Dannow on 6 March 1981. Somalia apparently lies to the east of the main wintering area for this species in Africa, although it occurs regularly in Kenya (Britton 1980). I found it overwintering quite commonly in Ethiopia, usually singly, but often in small parties, and once 20 together, mostly at 1800 to 3300 m in the rift valley and western highlands, between 8 July and 16 May. I only once saw a Spotted Redshank east of the rift valley, at Callafo in the Ogaden, on 3 November 1975.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

I saw one at ranges down to less than 3 m in a freshwater ditch close to the shore near Gezira on 9 December 1978. Its small size, lack of both call note and zigzag flight, and short bill, as well as other features, clearly identified it as this species. This is obviously a rare bird in eastern Africa, where in Kenya it is noted by Britton (1980) as being scarce, and all records are from the central highlands. Urban & Brown (1971) list it as "uncommon to rare" throughout Ethiopia, and I am able to trace only seven records up to that date (Guichard 1950, Cheesman & Sclater 1935, Ogilvie-Grant & Reid 1901, Schuz 1968, Moltoni & Ruscone 1940-1944), and a further seven since, including three of my own; all the Ethiopian records are from an area north of a line through Lake Tana, Langano and Harar.



Knot *Calidris canutus*

Backhurst et al. (1973) consider the Knot to be a rare vagrant to the East African coast, from which there are three records from Kenya and one from Tanzania (Taylor 1978). Heuglin's (1859) records from Ethiopia and Tadjura (stated to be in Somalia, but actually in present-day Djibouti) are queried by the author himself and are not generally recognized. I saw one in non-breeding plumage on 27 June 1979 at the lagoon at Gezira: a dumpy short-legged bird, between Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* and Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* in size (both present), short greenish legs, black bill shorter than the head, obvious spotting or speckling on the flanks, whitish rump scalloped all over with dark grey. After an interval during which no Knots were seen, another occurred on 3 August 1979 at the same locality. A detailed description indicated that it could not be the same bird as seen earlier. A single Knot was again present on 24 and 25 August 1979. In all cases the possibility of the birds being Great Knots *C. tenuirostris* was excluded.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*

I have four spring records of this species from Somalia. The first, on 20 April 1979 at Dannow, was in full or nearly full breeding plumage, but was only seen briefly in poor light and could not be found again. The next two were found the following spring in northern Somalia: the first on 2 May 1980 was with a Little Stint *C. minuta* and four Sanderlings *C. alba* in a mangrove lagoon at 1.5 km east of Alula. It was seen again the next day and again on returning through the area on 5 May, and detailed notes were taken to compare later with skins. Unfortunately we were unable to attempt to catch it as we were under police detention at the time.

A brief description of the bird is as follows: whole of sides of head to top of eye level, ear coverts, throat and upper breast a dull chestnut brown, as in the Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*, looking redder at a distance, but having almost a purplish bloom at 10 m range; top of head with very fine clear streaks on a pale ground; pale supercilium extending down behind the eye, with very fine streaks between the eye and the bill, and the trace of a paler streak on the side of the crown above the supercilium; mantle streaked buff and brownish grey with the wing coverts marked similarly; a fringe of streaky spots forming a gorget below the red throat, with a few larger spots on the upper flanks; rest of underparts immaculate white; legs black; bill black, shorter than head; central tail feathers black, the remainder greyish-white, paler than those of *C. minuta*, but not as white as the underparts; a whitish wing bar broader towards the primaries; silent. On 8 May 1980 further west at Garas Wadi near the shore another was seen with a Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*. It was very similar to the Alula bird except that the red colouration was confined to the lores and ear coverts. Another on 16 May 1981 was present all afternoon with a flock of 27 Sanderlings on the beach at Gezira, and was similar to the Garas Wadi bird. The birds in near-complete breeding plumage were matched by skins in the Smithsonian Institution, but there were no skins of either *minuta* or *ruficollis* which matched the other two. However, since these observations I have looked closely at very many spring adults of both species in various intermediate stages of plumage between winter and summer, and am convinced about the correct identification of the Somalia birds.

It would seem that this species, normally overwintering in southeast Asia and beyond, probably also visits Africa regularly in small numbers, and quite likely also undertakes a transcontinental migration with other waders from South Africa (vide Dowsett 1980). It is interesting that Kenya's first two Red-necked Stints were first seen on the same date as the last bird in Somalia (Taylor 1981).

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

Recently, in discussing the distribution of *L. falcinellus*, I suggested (Ash 1978) that a midwinter concentration may be discovered in Somalia to account for the large numbers found on passage at Aden. I have examined much of the Somalia coast in 1978 to 1981, and only found two Broad-billed Sandpipers - adults still in part breeding plumage at Kismayu on 10 October 1978, and at Gezira on 22 and 23 September 1981. It seems very unlikely that large numbers of this species will be found along this coast except possibly on suitable areas, worth investigation at the right time of the year, round Zeila in the north, where there are large areas of tidal flats similar to those at Assab and Djibouti, where this species is known to occur, and round Stamboul in the south where there are similar large areas.

The second bird was unusual in being very aggressive towards *Calidris* sandpipers (*minuta* and *ferruginea*), but it did not react to nearby *Charadrius* plovers (*hiaticula*, *marginatus* and *mongolus*). It fed by deep-probing to the full length of its beak in the wet sand, and also by rapidly picking off the surface.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Moreau (1972) shows the wintering area of *L. limosa* in Africa lying between 10 and 17N, from the Ethiopian rift valley westwards across the Sahel through Senegal. However, the species occurs commonly in Ethiopia to at least as far south as 7N (pers. obs.), and throughout Kenya (EANHS OSC 1978). In spite of this wide distribution there have been no records from Somalia until I saw one flying over seasonal marsh at Hawaala Buray on 4 January 1979, followed by two at Libsoma on 25 December 1979 and one on 21 January 1980. There were one to four at Dannow on 4 February, ten at Dhaay Tubako on 22 February 1980, and an unusual midsummer record of at least 18 near Uarmahan on 7 July 1981.

*Catharacta* spp.

I follow Devilliers (1977) in my recognition of these skuas, of which I have four records from Somalia. One of these is ascribed to the Brown Skua *C. skua loennbergi*, another to the South Polar Skua *C. maccormicki*, but the other two were unidentified. The two identified birds are discussed below, the others were as follows: one carrying a metal ring on its left leg was harrying immature Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus* over the beach at Hafun Bay on 27 April 1980; no plumage details were obtainable. A second very dark bird flying north on 4 May 1981 at Gezira, alighted on the sea for 5 min. Its uniform dark appearance and conspicuous golden 'mane' seen through a telescope suggested that it was *C. maccormicki*.

There are no previous records from Somalia for any *Catharacta* species and only very few from neighbouring countries: one from Ethiopia, two others from the Red Sea, and off the southern Arabian coast (Bailey 1966, Clapham 1964, Mann 1971, Morzer Bruyns & Voous 1961). There are two records from Kenya, one of which is identified as *C. antarctica madagascariensis* (= *loennbergi*) (Britton 1980).

South Polar Skua *Catharacta maccormicki*

As I stopped by the shore at Hal Hambo on 29 May 1981, a 'Great' Skua arrived and circled the vehicle several times to within a metre of the ground. It then settled on the sea c. 100 m away where I was able to watch it through a telescope for 10 min. I was able to identify it as *C. maccormicki* for the following reasons: uniform dark brown without any blotches or golden colour; small slender blue bill with a black tip; the white wing patch was fairly obvious, but not extensive.

*Brown Skua Catharacta skua loennbergi*

I found a fresh dead bird being washed ashore on the incoming tide at Mallable on 1 June 1979. Parts of this bird were identified by Dr Storrs Olson at the Smithsonian Institution where its Registration Number is 555611.

*Arctic Skua Stercorarius parasiticus*

Arctic Skuas apparently are not uncommon spring and autumn passage migrants off the eastern coast of Somalia, but as the species is so poorly known in this region I list all my records: Gezira, 27 October 1978, one adult pale phase with complete central tail feathers, was disturbed from sand dunes. It was unable to fly well as apparently some primaries were stuck together, possibly by oil. Mallable, 11 November 1978, a dark bird flying south off-shore. Gezira, 20 November 1978, at least four dark birds visible at one time harrying huge flocks of feeding terns. Gezira, 25 April 1979, an adult pale phase flying north close inshore. Hal Hambo, 17 August 1979, a juvenile skua, almost certainly this species. Gezira, 6 September 1979, a dark bird far out (species uncertain, but either *parasiticus* or *longicaudus*). Hafun, 27 April 1980, five pale phase adults with well developed pointed central tail feathers were seen in the bay in the evening; soon after sunset they circled high overhead, rose to a very great height and then departed due east overland across Ras Hafun. Early the following morning three pale phase adults passed northwards over the sea. Tohen, just south of Cape Guardafui, 4 May 1980, one pale adult flew north. Garas Wadi, on the north coast, 8 May 1980, a pale adult far out over the sea was either *parasiticus* or *pomarinus*. In the Gezira area in 1981, on 25 April, two pale adults persistently pursued a small wader high into the sky, but failed to catch it; on 1 May, a pale adult flew north, followed by two more on 5 May; on 14 November a dark bird judged to be *parasiticus* flew south, followed by another flying with a dark *pomarinus* on the next day.

Of the 25 birds noted above, 16 occurred 25 April - 8 May and seven on 11 to 20 November.

Backhurst (1971) records a spring adult from Kenya, and there are a few other probable records (Britton 1980). There are also several from Ethiopia (Ash pers. obs., C.S. Clapham pers. obs., Smith 1953), but there is no previous indication of a regular passage.

*Pomarine Skua Stercorarius pomarinus*

There are two sight records in spring 1980 from localities far apart along the east coast. The first was a pale sub-adult with short twisted central tail feathers, pursuing terns off Gezira in the south on 13 April 1980. A fully adult pale bird with a complete tail was watched through a telescope in flight and on the sea at Hafun in the north on 27 April 1980. Three dark birds flying south at Gezira on 10 and 15 November and 9 December 1981 were judged to be *pomarinus* rather than the smaller species; one was accompanied by a dark *parasiticus* with which it could be compared.

The species is previously unrecorded from Somalia, but there are four from Kenya (Britton 1980) and one from Ethiopia (Dahla Island, 5 March 1952). This bird is included in Smith (1953), but omitted from Smith (1957), but confirmed by him *in litt.* to me).

*Great Black-headed Gull Larus ichthyæetus*

With a recent increase of considerable numbers of this species in Ethiopia (Ash & Ashford 1977) together with new sightings in Kenya (Ash & Ashford 1977, Pearson 1977, etc.), it is not surprising that it should now be recorded from Somalia. On 27 February 1980 there was a fully adult bird in complete breeding plumage on the shore of Lake Radidi, close to the Juba River. In the

intense heat of the early afternoon it permitted approach to within 100 m as it stood on dry mud with its bill wide open. Its large size, almost that of nearby Egyptian Geese *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, with black head, yellow bill with black and red bands at the tip, and in flight pale grey wings with black tips on the outer of the otherwise all white primaries, together with other characters, were diagnostic for this species.

On 18 January 1981, there was a sub-adult on the shore at Hal Hambo with eight adult and immature *Larus fuscus* and an immature Herring Gull *L. argentatus* feeding on fish remains. It was about one-fifth larger than the Herring Gull and otherwise differed in the following ways: yellowish-brown bill with distal quarter dark and a trace of red at the tip; trace of a white orbital ring; dark lores and nape; trace of a white collar; grey upperparts with a few dark feathers; dark terminal bands to a white tail; primaries black; pale area in mid wing, including the tertials, very worn and bleached; the secondaries showed a thin white trailing edge and a dark subterminal bar.

It is quite usual for birds in African winter quarters to be in breeding plumage early in the year. I have some notes on this point from Ethiopia where the development of breeding plumage progressed as follows: 12 January, 63 adults (3 per cent in breeding plumage); 3 February, 72 adults (28 per cent); 22 February, 71 adults (many); 10 March, 25 adults (most).

#### Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*

A bird in first-summer plumage was with a flock of c. 500 terns on the beach at Hal Hambo on 8 May 1981. I watched it for ½h through a telescope (up to x60) at a range of 100 m. It was in excellent condition, aggressive towards any terns which came near it on the ground, and eventually flew strongly out to sea. Although presenting no problems in identification, I have not seen a field description of a Sabine's Gull in this intermediate plumage, so a fairly detailed description is warranted.

It was a small gull similar in size to some Lesser Crested Terns *Sterna bengalensis*, but intermediate between others and Common Tern *S. hirundo*. In flight: diagnostic wing pattern of three triangles, black outer primaries, white inner primaries and secondaries, and dark grey coverts. Head: a white forehead extending back over the crown to behind the eye, behind this the hood was reduced to an area of greyish-brown mottling, behind which there was a darker half-collar on the nape. Upperparts: mantle a shade paler than the wings, which were about the same dark grey as the local race of the Crested Tern *S. bergii velox*. At rest the visible primaries were black and only two of them showed white tips. Tail all white and slightly forked. The whole of the underparts were white except for a greyish area on the sides of the breast near the carpal joint. A 'neat' black bill, without yellow tip or obvious gonys, and it was shorter than the head. The legs were a nondescript putty or dull flesh colour, definitely not black or brown.

Normally wintering in the South Pacific and South Atlantic Oceans, extending as far south as South Africa (Cramp & Simmons 1982), this appears to be the first known occurrence of the species in the Indian Ocean north of Natal (Cramp & Simmons *op. cit.*). It was presumably a bird returning north up the 'wrong' side of Africa, and was very late to be so far south.

#### Lesser Noddy *Anous tenuirostris*

A full account of the large numbers, up to 1000/d, seen along the Somalia coast in 1978 and 1979, is published (Ash 1980b). In 1980 this species was again common in the Mogadishu area, in smaller numbers (maximum c. 100) than in 1979, from 23 May to at least 14 August. In addition, there was an ailing bird at Hafun Bay on 27 April, and possibly up to 200 on the next two days off Dante, in northern Somalia. In 1981 they were present in the Mogadishu area in small

numbers up to 13/d, 16 May to 2 August, and then on 17 November 118 flew south and there were a further 100 the next day.

There are no previous records for the country, but it would appear that it is a regular visitor from May to August in varying numbers, with others in April, September and October.

#### Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybridus*

There were three Whiskered Terns with 15 White-winged Black Terns *C. leucopterus* and a Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* at Dannow on 2 March 1979. The three Whiskered Terns were all coming into breeding plumage and had clearly demarcated black crowns; one had a few scattered black feathers on the underparts and another showed enough black to indicate, by contrast, the white 'whiskers'. They were slightly larger than the *C. leucopterus*, but much smaller than the *S. hirundo*.

There was another at the same locality on 18 January 1980. In 1981 there was an adult in near-complete breeding plumage near Uarmahan on 7 July, and three in various stages of breeding plumage at Kurtonwarey on 22 July. Probably these birds were of the Palaearctic nominate race, but with the known breeding of the Afrotropical race *delalandii* in Kenya, the possibility of this race cannot be ruled out and the status of the nominate form in East Africa is not clear. Whiskered Terns are well known in Kenya (Britton 1980) and Ethiopia (Urban & Brown 1971, Ash pers. obs.).

#### Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

An adult in almost complete breeding plumage was present all afternoon on 10 August 1980 on a salt-water lagoon at Gezira. Although continually harassed by the other terns (several hundred Common and White-cheeked *Sterna repressa*, 50 Roseate Terns *S. dougallii* and a few Lesser Crested Terns *S. bengalensis*) it always remained with them, both at rest and in flight in the flock. Its lores were jet black; the crown (extending well below and behind the eye), primaries, bill and legs were black; white lower belly; rest of body greyish-black; tail almost square; mottled with whitish on forehead and throat; leading edge of wing below near white; bill always held above the horizontal; about two-thirds the size of *S. repressa*.

This tern is an extremely rare bird in East Africa: there are only three records for Kenya (Britton 1980, Pearson & Lewis 1980) and, although stated to be common to uncommon throughout Ethiopia (Urban & Brown 1971) I only saw one in the eight years 1969 to 1977, at Bahadu on 8 May 1971, and have been able to trace only six other records (Finsch 1872, Cheesman & Sclater 1935, Salvadori 1907-1908, Clapham pers. obs., Hay 1969, Antinori & Salvadori 1873, Moltoni & Ruscone 1940-1944).

#### Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Over a period of about an hour on 23 May 1979 I watched a tern in flight and at rest round a large rain pool in a depression in arid thornbush at 6 km west of Og, 200 km from the sea, in northern Somalia. I was eventually convinced that it was an Arctic Tern, but as the first of this species in eastern Africa should occur inland it was collected for confirmation. It proved to be an adult female with undeveloped ovaries in full breeding plumage, and its identification was confirmed at the Smithsonian Institution by Dr G.E. Watson (Registration Number 571255). The wing-length was 273 mm, tarsus 18 mm. The main characters distinguishing it in the field from a Common Tern *S. hirundo*, of which an adult in breeding plumage had been seen a few days earlier over a dam lake at Hargeisa, were its all red bill, greyish white underparts not contrasting with its upperparts, dark tips to the trailing edge of the under primaries, and a white streak below the eye between the black crown and the

underparts.

In flight it occasionally associated with a single Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*, and there were also several other migrants present, a late female Garganey *Anas querquedula*, three Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius*, one Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, two Wood Sandpipers *T. glareola*, one Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus*, 20 Little Stints *Calidris minuta*, one Temminck's Stint *C. temminckii*, six Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* and a late Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*.

Three days later, on 26 May, in southern Somalia there was another exactly similar Arctic Tern in a large flock of six other species of terns resting on the beach at Gezira. It was conspicuous among the others in being the only bird with a red bill. The only terns seen in this coastal area with red on their bills at this time of the year, are a few Common Terns, some Roseates *S. dougallii* in which the red is admixed with black although mostly they are black, and some White-cheeked Terns *S. repressa*, both adults and immatures, with reddish-black bills, although mostly they are also all black.

In April 1980 I began to suspect that there were large numbers of Arctic Terns in the Gezira area, and flocks of six and 15 terns flying over the beach at Gezira on 7 and 10 April were in full breeding plumage with all red bills, and were almost certainly this species. An adult on the shore at the same place on 12 April was indubitably this species. During this month a large overland nocturnal migration of terns was discovered in the Mogadishu area, and reasons for supposing that these may have been Arctic Terns are given in Ash (in prep.).

On 10 July 1980 an ailing (constantly jerking as if trying to defaecate, and fell over once: it was subsequently found to have its cloaca blocked with a small patch of oil) first summer 'portlandica' Arctic Tern was watched for a long time and identified clearly as this species. It was collected and its identification confirmed by Dr G.E. Watson at the Smithsonian Institution (Registration Number 571256).

In 1981 there were five more records, a first summer bird at Gezira on 16 May, an adult in full breeding plumage there on 28 May; a first summer bird at Mallable on 19 June (weight 76.9 g, wing 256 mm, tarsus 14 mm); a first summer bird at Gezira on 27 July, and an adult in winter plumage at Mallable on 21 October.

#### Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

This species is only recorded rarely in East Africa, and a previous record from Somalia in Moltoni (1936) is open to doubt. It refers to an account by Ninni (1932) of the species being extremely abundant at Hafun, and the crags being so white with them to appear as if covered with snow. This description can hardly refer to this species, although it does appear to be commoner at Hafun than anywhere else in Somalia.

I saw a total of 14 birds on dates between 24 March and 3 May, and two others singly on 7 January and 29 May: near Mallable, one on 24 March 1979; Sabawanak, two on 13 May 1979; Gezira, one on 7 January 1980; Badey, near Eil, one on 23 April 1980; Hafun, one on 27 and two on 28 and 29 April 1980; Hafun Bay, one on 29 April 1980; Alula and Habo, one at each locality on 2 May 1980; Tohen, one on 3 May 1980; Hal Hambo, one on 29 May 1981.

The spring records seem to indicate northward passage through the Indian Ocean, but the January date suggests an overwintering bird and the other at the end of May was possibly oversummering. However, all but three of the above records are from northern Somalia, which may indicate an overwintering population in that area.

*African Skimmer Rynchops flavirostris*

There was an adult in full breeding plumage on a salt-water lagoon at Gezira on 10, 11, 14 and 15 June 1980. One flew south over the sea only 2 km north of the lagoon on 30 June, which no doubt was the one which joined the bird at the lagoon, for there were two there on several of my visits, 10 July to 7 August. An unmistakable species, clearly identified as *R. flavirostris*. It is locally common in Kenya (Britton 1980) and Ethiopia (pers. obs.), but mainly in the west.

*Ash's Lark Mirafra ashi*

This distinctive new species has been described recently from specimens I collected near Uarsheik (Colston 1982).

*Mosque Swallow Hirundo senegalensis*

This is a not unexpected species in southern Somalia where woodland with tall trees exists, for it is found nearby in coastal Kenya and, rather further away, in southern Ethiopia. On 26 September 1979 at 3 km south of Badada a single bird appeared high up flying steadily from the north over open woodland, and was clearly identified by its large size, white underwing coverts, large areas of pale on the cheeks and chestnut underparts.

*Banded Martin Riparia cincta*

A single Banded Martin seen soon after sunrise at Far Sarei on 20 February 1980 was feeding low over open grassland close to the Shebelle River. Several hours later there were five together at the same place. They were identified as they flew close past by their conspicuously large size and slow heavy flight, prominent dark breast bands and square tails. Dr C.C.H. Elliott saw a Banded Martin a few weeks earlier, on 10 January 1980, at what proved to be the same locality.

The present observation is over 600 km away from the nearest site in Kenya and about 950 km from the nearest Ethiopian one (Hall & Moreau 1970). These authors indicate only one locality east of the Ethiopian rift valley - an area in which it is obviously rare, for in the period 1969 to 1977 I saw the species on only four occasions there. In the rift valley itself and to the west and north in the highlands it is common.

It seems probable that the Somalia birds are referable to the race *suahelica* rather than *erlangeri*.

*Sand Martin Riparia riparia*

I have been unable to find any reference to Sand Martins in the Horn of Africa. In particular, there are no published records at all from the whole of Somalia, nor from the adjoining Ogaden area of Ethiopia. Moreau (1972) does not refer to the species east of a line through Lake Tana in Ethiopia and Kampala in Uganda. In my experience in Ethiopia it is a common to abundant bird in the rift valley and westwards, but is seldom seen east of the rift. In the Ogaden I have records of two single birds, and a flock of 200 at Callafo on the Webi Shebelle on 3 November 1975. Eastwards through Somalia it is apparently equally uncommon. I saw the first at Coriole on 3 December 1978, and then at least 50 with hundreds of Eurasian Swallows *Hirundo rustica* sitting on a roughly ploughed field at Farhana on 5 December 1978.

Following these observations further small numbers (1-10) were seen in several widely scattered localities in the south, including: 38 km south of Afgol, 11 km northwest of Bur Acaba, Lugh, Jiohar, Libsoma and Far Sarei, on dates between 6 October and 16 April, and once a larger gathering of at least 60 birds at Lake Gudan on 22 February 1980. One on northward migration was flying low over the beach 25 km southwest of Adale on 16 April 1980.

Pied Crow *Corvus albus* × Brown-necked Raven *C. ruficollis edithae* hybrids

In discussing the hybridization of Pied Crows and Brown-necked Ravens it is first of all necessary to summarize the existing knowledge concerning the distribution of the two species involved. *C. r. edithae* has a wide distribution throughout most of the country, but inexplicably is apparently absent from quite large areas (notably from west of the Juba River, and in the northeast coastal region, where in the eastern sector of the narrow coastal northern plain it is replaced by *C. albus*). *C. albus* has two distinct populations confined to narrow coastal belts, in the south from Mogadishu to south of Kisumu, and in the north from Berbera to Cape Guardafui, and is rarely seen inland beyond 20-30 km from the coast. The southern population of *C. alba* overlaps that of *C. r. edithae*, but in the north it does so only in the western half of its range.

In the Mogadishu area, hybrids showing every graduation of plumage characteristics between the two species are fairly common, but seem to be confined to the immediate area of the town and occasionally up to 12 km to the northeast and southwest, and I have one record from further south at Brava on 3 October 1978. On several occasions I have seen a bird of each species consorting closely together as if paired, and twice an *albus* was seen associating closely with a hybrid, but unfortunately no clue was obtained about the pairing relative to the sex of the individuals. Although both species breed in the area, no mixed breeding pairs have been found, suggesting that the hybrids are true interspecific hybrids and therefore sterile (but see below). It is curious that these city hybrids have not been recorded previously; it seems likely that in the future they will be found in the western sector of the *C. albus* population in its northern range, and in the southern sector of its southern range.

These hybrids are more widely distributed in Ethiopia, due no doubt to the fact that the distributions of the two species overlap, albeit in a mainly narrow zone, almost throughout the length of the country from north to south. *C. albus* is mainly restricted to the west of the rift valley, but extends down the whole of the Red Sea coast to Assab, and also occurs in the Chercher and southeast highlands of Arussi and Bale. *C. r. edithae*, on the other hand, is mainly confined to the area east of the rift valley, with an extension through coastal Eritrea, and in the south to the Lake Turkana area, and with a few records in the highlands to the west of Addis Ababa. Hybridization occurs in this area of overlap, where it is analogous to the situation regarding the Carrion and Hooded Crows *Corvus corone corone* and *C. corone cornix* in the Palaearctic. Blair (1961) has summarized the situation in central Ethiopia, mainly from his own observations in Arussi, Bale and round Hara. In this last area hybrids are particularly numerous, and I once saw there a male *albus* (from its behaviour) displaying to a (presumed) female *edithae*. Blair recorded a male *edithae* paired with a female hybrid. Smith (1955) recorded hybrids at Thio in coastal Eritrea, and Kleinschmidt (1906) discusses hybrids in Ethiopia. There is no mention of hybrids in Kenya (Britton 1980).

Clearly the situation of hybridization between these two crow species has phylogenetic significance, and warrants further investigation to establish the true relationship of the *Corvus ruficollis/edithae/albus* complex.

#### Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*

There were many Lesser Swamp Warblers singing in the dense and extensive *Typha* beds on my first visit to Dannow on 8 November 1978. On subsequent visits 47 birds were netted and some specimens collected. The mean wing-length of 43 birds was 60.7 mm (range 57-64 mm), of which four males were 61-63 mm and one female 60 mm. Thus the mean wing-length of this population is actually below the shortest wing-length given by White (1960) for even the smallest race of



*A. gracilirostris*. It seems likely therefore that this population is sufficiently isolated to be differentiated from its nearest congeners, *A. g. leptorhyncha* of Kenya's eastern lowlands and northeast Ethiopia. I also measured 51 examples of *A. gracilirostris* from Bahadu, Danakil, in the Awash valley in Ethiopia, where a population of *A. g. leptorhyncha* exists of similar size to other populations of *leptorhyncha*, but possibly differs from them in colour (White *op. cit.*); the mean wing-length of these birds was 65.3 mm (range 59-70 mm).

Birds from Bahadu and Dannow are paler and smaller than other *leptorhyncha*. Dannow birds show much variation in the colour of the upperparts, from dull grey-brown through reddish-brown; Bahadu birds are redder and larger. Both populations are considered here as *leptorhyncha*, although probably both deserve new names. I began to think that the Dannow population might be discrete, for searches elsewhere in suitable habitat in Somalia failed to produce any until one was found in *Typha* at Lake Gudan on 22 February 1980. On a visit to Dannow on 13 August 1980 the area was being drained and the remaining few swamp warblers were singing in the last small patch of *Typha*.

#### Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

I saw one to three *Acrocephalus*, thought to be Marsh Warblers, in rather thick riverside scrub at Afgoi on 12 December 1978. Next day there was a similar bird in the same place, and it was eventually driven into a net. It proved to be this species with wing-length 67 mm and weight 11.9 g; the notch on the 2nd primary = 9.5 mm = 6th primary tip. As it was the first recorded from Somalia it was preserved. However, R.J. Dowsett (*in litt.* 30 June 1979) informs me that the specimen in the British Museum, identified as *A. scirpaceus* collected by Elliott (1897) at Las Durban on 8 May 1896 is, in fact, *palustris*. Archer & Godman (1961) do not refer to this bird, listed by Elliott as *A. streperus*, under either *palustris* or *scirpaceus*. Subsequently I found Marsh Warblers on spring passage in northern Somalia, where no doubt later they will be found to be regular and common, as follows: El Hamurre, 22 April 1980, one in acacia near a well had olive upperparts without any rufous, much whiter below than the Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida* accompanying it, pale brown legs, orange mouth, and none of the tail- or wing-flicking of *Hippolais*. Alula, 3 May 1980, one in mangroves and one netted nearby on 5 May 1980 (wing 66 mm, weight 16.5 g). Near Bosaso at an oasis round the hot springs at 11 km east of the town, 8 May 1980, six seen, of which three netted (wings: 68, 68, 69 mm; weights: 16.5, 14.9, 15.9 g respectively). El Dere, 16 May 1980, one watched at dawn in thornbush at point-blank range. The notch on the 2nd primary of the four netted birds equalled primaries 6/7, 7, 7/8, and 7/8.

Marsh Warblers are fairly common passage migrants in Ethiopia, mainly from mid August to the end of September, with a few widespread until 14 December. I only handled five birds in spring: an early one collected on Debre Mariam Island, Lake Tana, on 4 April 1977, and two each day on 21 and 22 April 1977 at Lake Koka in the rift valley. The weights of these five, in order of catching, were 11.5, 10.2, 14.6, 13.5 and 10.4 g - a wide range of variation and all lighter than the Somalia birds caught later in the spring. It is a spring passage migrant in small numbers in eastern Kenya in April, but is abundant in autumn (Britton 1980).

Incidentally, the only previous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* recorded from Somalia is one from Dolo (van Someren MS, where it is listed as *A. s. fuscus*), although - nowadays at any rate - it is not uncommon, overwintering and on passage (*pers. obs.*).

#### Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

As I stepped ashore on Saad-al-Din Island in the Gulf of Aden of Zeila on 10 May 1979, I was immediately reminded of a landing in December 1972 on a similar

though smaller island in the Red Sea, Scek Said, off Massawa where two species of *Acrocephalus* were in full song. On each island they were African Reed Warblers *A. baeticatus* and Clamorous Reed Warblers. A hastily erected net only caught one of the latter species in the narrow belt of mangroves at that point. A short distance away the mangroves were denser and wider, and in roughly 1 km of these I counted at least 20 singing *stentoreus* and two *baeticatus*.

Details of the collected specimen, now in the Smithsonian Institution (Registration Number 571273) are: wing 85 mm, weight 23.4 g, male with advanced testes of 7 mm. Wing formula: primaries 3 and 4 longest, 2nd = -4 mm (=5/6), 5th = -2 mm, 6th = -5 mm, 7th = -8.5 mm, 10th = -15 mm; secondaries = -15 mm; 2nd-4th primaries emarginated; notch on inner web of 2nd = 18 mm (= secondaries); 1st = 5 mm less than primary coverts. Tail 77 mm (16 mm between shortest and longest feathers). Bill length: 28 mm from gape, 26 mm from skull and 15.5 mm from distal end of nostrils. Tarsus 29 mm and dark pinkish grey. Iris dull brown. Soles pale greenish. Mouth bright orange red. Upper mandible dark grey, lower mandible with proximal half pinkish white and distal half grey. The song was a mixture of croaking frog-like notes interspersed with some sweeter ones.

There was also a large *Acrocephalus* with a croaking song in mangroves at Habo on 2 May 1980, but I could not see it well enough to decide whether it was *stentoreus* or a migrant Great Reed Warbler *A. arundinaceus*.

The taxonomic status of the *A. stentoreus* in the Red Sea/Gulf of Aden area mangroves requires further investigation, although the populations would appear to be referable to *A.s. brunnescens*. The species is known from mangroves at Suakin, Sudan, where it was found at my instigation by G. Nikolaus (female in breeding condition in the Smithsonian Institution (Registration Number 570441), 10 March 1976, wing 78 mm, weight 21.0 g); Scek Said Island, Massawa (see above), where an unsexed bird was collected for me by Brother E. Johnson on 7 January 1976, wing 85 mm; a male with very large testes collected by K.D. Smith at Zula, Eritrea, on 26 January 1952 (British Museum Registration Number 1952.25.22); a male with very large testes collected on 10 February 1949 at 32 km south of Jizan, southwest Arabia (British Museum Registration Number 1950.8.4); a male from Assab, Eritrea, 29 January 1907 (Madarasz 1915); from Massawa in May, June and July (Heuglin 1877); from Eri in Sudan (Heuglin 1861), and again from Massawa in April 1870 (Antinori & Salvadori 1873). It is also recorded from the Dahlac Islands (Urban & Boswell 1969), and again from Assab (Kittenberger 1907) and Zula (Smith 1961).

Heuglin (1869) found birds breeding in June on the Eritrean coast and these have been ascribed to *A. s. stentoreus* by White (1960); but most of the others, including birds with developed gonads, and the Somalia specimen, appear to be *A. s. brunnescens*. As Smith (1961) suggests, there is probably a sedentary population occupying this area, which may well require a new name.

#### Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

I watched an Icterine Warbler closely for 5 min among the hundreds of migrants at Takoshe on 9 May 1979. It was in a small open acacia tree, and had a typical long pale *Hippolais* bill, uniform pale yellow underparts, distinct pale wing panel, and blue legs. Both Moreau (1972) and Backhurst *et al.* (1973) have speculated, using the meagre data available, on the possibility of this species using different passage routes in spring and autumn, and have arrived at opposite suggestions: Moreau's view is that Icterine Warblers may use a loop migration through East Africa in autumn and through the east of West Africa in spring; the others suggest that "It probably passes mainly west of our area [Kenya and Tanzania] on its way to and from winter quarters. .. it may well use a more easterly route on return passage..."

In Ethiopia, well north of the wintering area, Smith (1957) found them uncommon, in autumn only, in Eritrea from 2 to 19 September. Further south in the country I found only seven birds in 1969-1977, three in spring 8-14 April, and four in autumn 11-27 September. Although too few in number on which to base any firm conclusion, these records do not suggest a great difference between spring and autumn; nor do they indicate anything more substantial than a small passage at both seasons. My Ethiopian records are from the rift valley or to the east of it, including one in Danakil (Ash 1973).

Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum*

I watched one well on 3 May 1980 in a small patch of acacia bush on the otherwise bare hills behind Cape Guardafui at 9 km east of Alula. At first glance from the vehicle I took it to be a possible Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*, but good views over the next 15 min and comparison with Upcher's Warblers *H. languida* enabled it to be identified as *H. olivetorum*. It was noticeably larger than *languida* and was judged to be about the same size as the many Rufous Bush Chats *Cercotrichas galactotes* present; its typical *Hippolais* bill and blue legs were conspicuous, as well as a pale wing panel, and it flicked its tail in the same manner as *languida*. The many other Palearctic migrants in the same patch of bush, ten Upcher's Warblers, 35 Rufous Bush Chats, one Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*, two Spotted Flycatchers *Muscicapa striata* and one Eurasian Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* suggested that there may be a substantial passage through this area.

The Olive-tree Warbler is an uncommon spring and autumn passage migrant in Kenya (Britton 1980), and there are only three occurrences in Ethiopia, all in Eritrea (Finsch 1872, Zedlitz 1911, Smith 1957).

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Several *Phylloscopus* were seen feeding high in a group of large *Ficus* trees on the bank of the Webi Shebelle 10 km northeast of Afgoi, in February to April 1979. The first of these, on 11 February, was a Willow Warbler *P. trochilus*, a species previously unknown in Somalia except in the extreme north-west (Archer & Godman 1961). On 26 March there were three birds which I identified as one *trochilus* and two *sibilatrix*; on 28th there were one and three respectively; and on 2 April one *sibilatrix*. Three *sibilatrix* collected are deposited in the Smithsonian Institution (Registration Numbers 571319-571321), where I confirmed their identification.

In the following winter there were three *sibilatrix* in the same group of fig trees on 16 December 1979, and a single bird there on 5, 16 and 26 January 1980. Later, in 1981, I saw other Wood Warblers in the same site on 23 February (1) and 23 December (2), and two at Jiohar on 20 November.

The main point of interest about these birds is that they are so far to the east. Moreau (1972) states that most Wood Warblers overwinter in an area between 9N and the equator, and probably only between about 10W and 35E. Overwintering birds, or even passage birds, at around 45E and 2N are totally unexpected. That the species is rare in the area east of that delineated by Moreau is supported by the fact that there are only two known occurrences in Ethiopia (in November and May, Ash 1973, 1977) and only seven in Kenya (Backhurst et al. 1973, G.C. Backhurst pers. comm.).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

It is strange that the Garden Warbler has avoided detection and collection in Somalia for so long. On a brief visit to the north in May 1979 and 1980 I found four birds, which suggests that it is not uncommon on spring passage: Takoshe, 11 May 1979, one netted and ringed, wing 79 mm, weight 25.8 g (i.e. c. 8-9 g of fat); Bihendula, 14 May 1979, one feeding on ripe figs in a high

*Ficus* in this mountain oasis; Sheikh (at 11 km south), 14 May 1979, one in thornbush in a wadi; Moon, 11 May 1980, one with a male Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* in a *Ficus*. These individuals presumably formed part of an eastward extension of the large spring passage of fattened Garden Warblers which passes through the Danakil area of northeast Ethiopia in April and May (Ash pers. obs.).

Four-coloured Bush Shrike *Malaconotus quadricolor*

A very secretive species of which a suspected adult was glimpsed on 18 September 1979 at 38 km south of Kolbio in the Dibi Jilabe Forest by J.E. Miskell. The following day I saw an immature very well at a further 2 km south, and in this area an adult and an immature were netted and another immature seen on 24 September (Smithsonian Institution Registration Numbers 571307-8). It is a not uncommon bird of coastal East Africa, extending well inland in some areas, but previously known only to extend along the coast to as far north as Lamu (Britton 1980). Somalia specimens are identical to *M. q. nigricauda* from Kenya.

Eurasian Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

I watched a Eurasian Starling flying about in typical fashion - alternate flapping and gliding flight - over open bush at Hawaala Buray on 27 December 1978. It flew down to an adjoining marsh, alighted on some dead stalks, which it then sidled down to drink from some open water below. On approaching to 12 m I could see that it was in every way a typical Eurasian Starling, very alert and apparently healthy, in spotted winter plumage, with a dark bill and eye, bright pink-flesh legs and slightly crested nape feathers. There were flocks of local starlings in the vicinity, Superb and Fischer's Starlings *Spreo superbus* and *fischeri*, but it did not associate with them. After a few minutes it flew off to a bush in which many *Quelea quelea* were gathering prior to roosting, and could not be found again that evening or on subsequent days.

Apart from the introduced South African population, there would appear to be only one other occurrence of a Eurasian Starling in Africa south of the Sahara, a recovery of a ringed nominate bird at Dessie, Ethiopia (Jitschin 1938).

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* × Somali Sparrow *P. castanopterus* hybrid  
This interesting hybrid from Hal Hambo on 6-7 March 1980 is discussed in detail in Ash & Colston (1981).

Peters' Twinspot *Hypargos niveoguttatus*

This species was to be expected in southern Somalia for it is known nearby in coastal Kenya. It proved to be common along the Kenya/Somalia border track at 38 and 40 km south of Kolbio, in the Dibi Jilabe Forest. A male was caught on 18 September 1979, followed by 12 others of both sexes on 24th and 25th. The males are similar to Kenya specimens of the race *macrospilotus*, but are more orange-red on the breast and have larger white spots on the flanks and underparts (Smithsonian Institution Registration Numbers 571301-2). They may require a new name when material can be examined from the intervening area north of Lamu.

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## APPENDIX GAZETTEER

Co-ordinates are in degrees and minutes

Adale, Som.	02.45N, 46.19E	Brava, Som.	01.06N, 44.03E
Addis Ababa, Eth.	09.02N, 38.45E	Bur Acaba, Som.	02.48N, 44.04E
Afgoi, Som.	02.08N, 45.08E	Bur Heybo, Som.	03.00N, 44.18E
Alula, Som.	11.58N, 50.15E	Callafo, Eth.	05.36N, 44.13E
Arussi, Eth. (Province)	08.00N, 39.00E	Chercher Highlands,	
Aseita, Eth.	11.33N, 41.26E	Eth.	09 N, 41.30E
Assab, Eth.	13.01N, 42.43E	Coriole, Som.	01.47N, 44.31E
Audegle, Som.	01.51N, 44.52E	Dahlak Is., Eth.	15.40N, 40.00E
Badada, Som.	01.02S, 41.29E	Danakil, Eth.	13 N 41 E
Bahadu, Eth.	10.05N, 40.37E	Dannow, Som.	01.44N, 44.32E
Balad, Som.	02.23N, 45.24E	Dante, Som.	10.26N, 51.16E
Bale, Eth.	06.30N, 39.30E	Debre Mariam Is., Eth.	13.56N, 39.22E
Berbera, Som.	10.26N, 45.02E	Deësie, Eth.	11.11N, 39.38E
Berdid, Som.	01.53N, 44.44E	Dhaay Tubako, Som.	00.27N, 43.00E
Bihendula, Som.	10.11N, 45.08E	Dibi Jilabe Forest,	
Billakh, Som.	00.48N, 43.17E	Som.	01.26S, 41.27E
Bqasaso, Som.	11.17N, 49.10E	Djibouti, Djib.	11.35N, 43.09E



Dolo, Som./Eth.	04.10N, 42.06E	Mallable, Som.	02.12N, 45.37E
Dujima, Som.	01.15N, 42.34E	Manyo Farar, Som.	01.45N, 44.31E
Dusa Mareb, Som.	05.32N, 46.23E	Marerei, Som.	00.25N, 42.43E
Eil, Som.	07.59N, 49.49E	Massawa, Eth.	15.36N, 39.29E
El Dario, Som.	11.47N, 50.33E	Moccoidumis, Som.	01.37N, 44.26E
El Dere, Som.	05.22N, 46.10E	Mogadishu, Som.	02.03N, 45.21E
El Hamurre, Som.	07.13N, 48.54E	Moon, Som.	11.01N, 48.26E
Fanolé, Som.	00.26N, 42.47E	Mustahil, Eth.	05.15N, 44.44E
Farhana, Som.	01.45N, 44.32E	Og (6 km west), Som.	08.47N, 46.32E
Farkero, Som.	01.47N, 44.36E	Ogaden, Eth.	07 N, 45 E
Far Sarei, Som.	01.01N, 43.22E	Radidi, Lake, Som.	01.16N, 42.34E
Galboy, Som.	02.27N, 44.51E	Ras Hafun, Som.	10.27N, 51.24E
Gelib, Som.	00.29N, 42.47E	Ras Kiamboni, Som.	01.38S, 41.36E
Genale, Som.	01.49N, 44.42E	Saad-al-Din Is., Som.	11.27N, 43.27E
Gezira, Som.	01.57N, 45.11E	Saad Din, Som.	11.27N, 43.27E
Guardafui, Cape, Som.	11.50N, 51.16E	Sabawanak, Som.	10.33N, 44.08E
Gudan, Lake, Som.	00.47N, 43.17E	Scek Said Is., Eth.	15.35N, 39.29E
Habo, Som.	11.47N, 50.32E	Shalambot, Som.	01.43N, 44.41E
Hafun, Som.	10.25N, 51.20E	Sheikh, Som.	09.56N, 45.12E
Hafun Bay, Som.	10.25N, 51.15E	Shonde, Som.	01.10N, 42.33E
Hal Hambo, Som.	01.54N, 45.05E	Shongolo Forest, Som.	00.47N, 42.38E
Harar, Eth.	09.19N, 42.08E	Sinadogo, Lake, Som.	05.22N, 46.21E
Hargeisa, Som.	09.32N, 44.03E	Sokoke Forest, Ken.	03.31S, 39.49E
Hawaala Buray, Som.	02.26N, 45.17E	Stamboul, Som.	00.50S, 42.07E
Ionte, Som.	00.07S, 42.33E	Suakin, Sudan	19.07N, 37.20E
Iskushuban, Som.	10.17N, 50.14E	Tadjura, Djib.	11.47N, 42.55E
Jiohar, Som.	02.47N, 45.31E	Takoshe, Som.	11.20N, 43.23E
Juba, River, Som.	00.15S, 42.37E	Tana, Lake, Eth.	12.00N, 37.20E
Kampala, Uganda	00.19N, 32.34E	Tana River, Ken.	02.33S, 40.31E
Kilifi, Ken.	03.38S, 39.51E	Thio, Eth.	14.42N, 40.53E
Kismayu, Som.	00.22S, 42.32E	Tohen, Som.	11.44N, 51.15E
Koka, Lake, Eth.	08.27N, 39.06E	Turkana, Lake, Eth./	
Kolbio, Som.	01.08S, 41.13E	Ken.	03.30N, 36.00E
Kurtonwarey, Som.	01.37N, 44.20E	Uanle Uen, Som.	02.37N, 44.54E
Lamu, Ken.	02.17S, 40.55E	Uarmahan, Som.	02.24N, 45.01E
Langano, Lake, Eth.	07.35N, 38.45E	Uarscheik, Som.	02.18N, 45.47E
Las Durban, Som.	c. 10.28N, 45.02E	Uar Uorba, Som.	01.28N, 42.57E
Lirpsoma, Som.	02.07N, 45.03E	Wajir, Ken.	01.45N, 40.04E
Lugh, Som.	03.48N, 42.32E	Webi Shebelle, Som.	00.15N, 43.03E
Mait, Som.	10.58N, 47.04E	Zeila, Som.	11.21N, 43.28E
Mait Is., Som.	11.16N, 4-15E	Zula, Eth.	15.25N, 39.40E

SOOTY TERNS *STERNA FUSCATA* IN SOMALIA, WITH INLAND OCCURRENCES

J.S. Ash &amp; J.W. Ash

It has been thought that Sooty Terns *Sterna fuscata* only seem to occur as vagrants off the Somalia coast (Bailey 1971). Evidence is presented here to show that they occur frequently, and sometimes in large numbers. Their activities are difficult to interpret due to the presence of local breeding colonies and feeding birds, but tentative conclusions indicate that there would appear to be northward spring migration in March-May and southward autumn migration in September-November. These presumed migratory movements are sometimes associated with the arrival of birds in a weakened state, with subsequent mortality.

We were unable to make regular systematic periods of observation, but we saw Sooty Terns along the coast near Mogadishu (2.03N, 45.21E) in all months between 30 March and 24 November, but the largest numbers occurred in April (1980) and in October and November (1981). Observations were made over a wider area in spring 1980. The total period of observation extended from August 1978 to January 1982, and the results are summarized in an Appendix where all refer to the Mogadishu area except where stated. The local breeding situation has been described by Ash & Karani (1981).

## PRESUMED SPRING MIGRATION

In the three years 1979 to 1981, in which there were observations in spring, Sooty Terns occurred in them all during the period 30 March - 22 May. However, there was some annual variation in the dates, viz. 30 March - 9 April in 1979, 11 April - 4 May in 1980 and 6 April - 22 May in 1981. These seemed to be discrete groups of birds which passed through before the local breeders arrived. Following their disappearance there were intervals of 77, 43 and 14 days respectively before birds arrived in the vicinity of the local colonies.

It is thus probably unlikely that the Sooty Terns present in March - May were associated with these colonies, but their provenance and ultimate destination are at present a matter of conjecture. They may have been birds dispersing from colonies off the Kenya coast (Britton 1980), or from even further afield, and the presence of immatures tends to support this view. Further breeding occurs in the boreal summer on Mait Island (11.16N, 47.15E) in the Gulf of Aden (North 1946), so that birds heading there may be involved in the spring movements along the eastern seaboard of Somalia.

The numbers seen in each of these years varied considerably. In 1979 and 1981 there were only a few, but in 1980 there were many, with over 1000 on one day. The present evidence, some of it circumstantial, indicates that these birds are moving north.

## PRESUMED AUTUMN MIGRATION

Sooty Terns were recorded in each of the four autumns of migration, 1978 to 1981, during the period 1 September (when, however, there were only two birds) to 24 November. As in spring, many of these birds, particularly in 1981, arrived long after the local breeding birds were last seen - intervals of 48 d in 1979 and 71 d in 1981. Birds in autumn were mainly heading in a southerly direction, but the situation was even more confused than in spring, so that it is not possible to more than suggest that they may have been on postnuptial passage out of the Gulf of Aden. Unfortunately it is not known when immatures of this species moult, but Bailey (1968) thought that it might

occur far out to sea.

In the autumns of 1978 - 1980 there were few birds, but in 1981 there were 50-300/d on eight days.

#### DEAD AND AILING BIRDS

A relatively large proportion of dead and ailing Sooty Terns was found. Other species of terns occur on migration and in feeding flocks in vastly greater numbers, but only a very few dead or weakened individuals were found during the much longer period when they were present. This suggests some special factor, or factors, involving Sooty Terns which do not affect the other species in this area. All these casualties are included among the records listed in the Appendix, where they are mostly in the springs of 1979 and 1980 and the autumn of 1981.

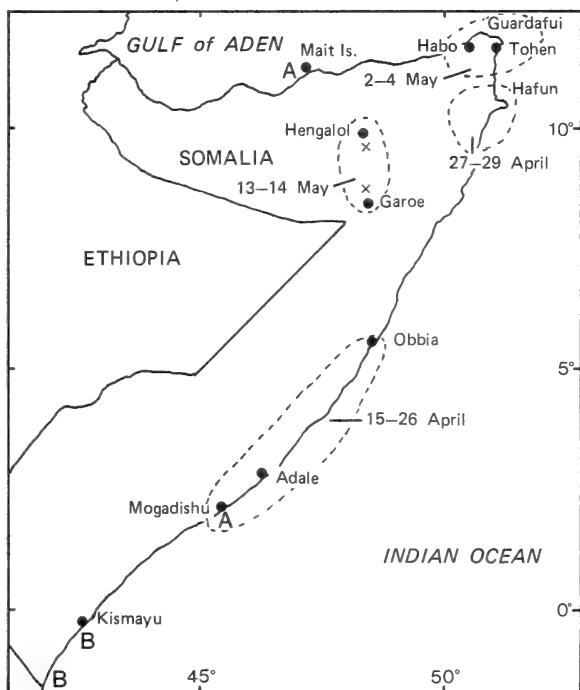


Fig. 1. Dates of occurrences of Sooty Terns *Sterna fuscata* in Somalia in spring 1980. X = inland records; A = known breeding sites; B = possible breeding sites. The dashed lines enclose periods of occurrences.

In spring 1980 (Fig. 1), observations were made along the east coast north of Mogadishu as far as Cape Guardafui (11.50N, 51.16E) and for a short distance along the north coast. One of us (JSA) travelled this route, accompanied by J.E. Miskell, for five weeks from 15 April. In the meantime JWA was observing at Mogadishu. The sequence of events with regard to Sooty Terns was as follows:

in April at Mogadishu, a few flew over the sea close to the beach on 17th

and 18th, a further seven on 22nd and 15 on 23rd; on 26th many weak birds flew about low over the heads of people on the beach. At Hafun Bay (10.25N, 51.15E), four immatures were over the beach, and c. 100 adults and immatures over the sea at the head of the bay on 27th, and on 28th at Hafun (10.25N, 51.20E), 1000+ flew north in the early morning, almost all along the shoreline and appearing to be nearly exhausted; on the following day only c. 100 were counted. In May, six fresh adult and two immature birds were found dead on a few hundred metres of beach at Tohen (11.44N, 51.15E) on 4th, and at Cape Guardafui a fresh dead adult was found by J.E. Miskell; on 13th at 6 km south of Hengalol (9.38N, 48.22E), one dead undamaged but sun-dried adult was inland on the open grassy plain, 182 km from the Gulf of Aden and 277 km from the Indian Ocean, and on 14th at 23 km north of Garoe (8.34N, 48.33E), there was another similar bird, 299 km from the Gulf of Aden and 163 km from the Indian Ocean. These observations are illustrated in Fig. 1.

Based on the facts that there were no birds at Mogadishu after 26 April, that weak birds were coasting north at Hafun on 27-29 April, and that birds died during the night of 3-4 May at Tohen (none dead on 3rd, but eight found on a short stretch of beach on 4th), strongly suggested that there had been progressive movement north of increasingly weakened birds over a period of 10 d or so. The dead birds far inland later in the month were probably involved in this same movement.

Further mortality and atypical behaviour (see below) indicated that weakened birds were involved in a southerly migration in October 1981.

## DISCUSSION

The present observations indicate an apparently northerly spring and southerly autumn passage of Sooty Terns off Somalia's eastern coast. It is variable in extent and in some years one or other migration may not appear at all, or be so small that it is overlooked. The factors causing this variation are unknown, but they are likely to be related to food-availability and wind strength, as well as to other factors referred to below.

The dead and ailing birds are more difficult to explain, but the fact that they occurred to a greater or lesser extent in at least three of the seven migration seasons in which observations were made (twice in spring and at least once in autumn) suggests that they are probably a fairly regular feature of Sooty Tern migration. The causal factors may be due to one or more of the following: disease, disorientation and subsequent exhaustion, starvation resulting from non-availability of food, or to a combination of any of these factors.

Usually Sooty Terns on passage, or when feeding offshore, fly strongly and in a purposeful manner; birds seen flying about listlessly and aimlessly over the shoreline and beach, often circling and calling, are probably all in a weakened state, for some fall to the ground and die. At such times they often join flocks of other species of tern when they congregate to bathe and preen on the beach after fishing, but do not themselves participate in these activities. Birds flying about calling over the town of Mogadishu at night may also be in this category. Many obviously weak birds in late April 1980 were flying about among the many people on the town beach, and a few days later at Hafun many of the birds flying along the rocky shore were barely able to fly and one actually flew head-on into a rock-face and fell stunned to the ground below.

The two dead birds found far inland were presumably wind-drifted and exhausted birds, even although the wind strengths were not abnormal. It is possible that birds at Hafun and even further south may pass overland from the Indian Ocean to the Gulf of Aden, although this is unlikely in an essentially pelagic species.

In the absence of post-mortem examinations we cannot elaborate on the possibility of the birds being weakened by disease. Soldado Virus is known to affect Sooty Tern young in breeding colonies (Converse et al. 1975), but probably this would be an unlikely condition in migrating adults. Similarly we have no data on food availability, although its shortage, perhaps associated with the seasonal change in the monsoon at the end of April, is the most likely explanation for weakened birds. Poisoning by pesticide residues can be discounted almost certainly in the western Indian Ocean, but contact with dinoflagellates whilst feeding is a distinctly possible cause of the mortality.

The subject of sick sea-birds has been reviewed recently by Bourne et al. (1977). The point is made in the present paper that mortality is associated with the migratory passage of Sooty Terns along the Indian Ocean coast of Somalia, but the cause of it is not known. It is presumably very much greater than is indicated by the scattered observations of the one or two observers present in the area.

Finally, a regular feature of the behaviour of several species of terns along the Somalia coast in spring is for the birds to come inshore in the evening - usually starting 30-40 min before sunset. Flocks of birds circle in the air currents often reaching considerable altitudes and sometimes come overland. The function of these flights is unknown, but they do not seem to be connected with the overland departure on nocturnal migration of large flocks of other terns witnessed in the same area. Sooty Terns, particularly immatures, are occasionally involved, and have sometimes been seen after these flights a short distance inland flying purposefully back towards the shore. This may be a form of orientation behaviour in which birds are seeking visual cues, or possibly favourable coastal air currents.

The wing-lengths of 21 dead adults measured 271-302 mm, mean 289 mm; and two dead immatures had wings of 285 and 288 mm.

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## APPENDIX

Sooty Terns *Sterna fuscata* recorded in Somalia 1978-1981; all are in the Mogadishu area unless stated otherwise.

1978: an ailing adult on 1 Sep, and two long-dead adults in Oct and Nov.

1979: 30 Mar - 8 Apr, 1-2 immatures on four occasions;

5 Apr, a fresh dead adult; 9 Apr, 8 immatures at sea;

Jun, 3 long-dead adults;

24 Jun - 14 Aug, birds at local breeding colony (see Ash & Karani (1981));

1 Nov, 1 immature at sea; 7 Nov, c. 50 at sea (half immatures).

1980: 11 Apr, 1 adult and 2 immatures at sea; 12 Apr, 1 immature at sea;

15 Apr, Adale (2.36N, 46.12E) at 25 km SE, 5; 17-18 Apr, a few close

to beach over sea; 20 Apr, Obbia (5.21N, 48.32E), 3; 22 Apr, 7 close

to beach; 23 Apr, 15 close inshore; 26 Apr, many in weakened state

flying close over heads of people on beach; Hafun Bay, 27 Apr, 4

immatures over beach and c. 100 adults and immatures over sea; Hafun,

28 Apr, 1000+ going north in early morning, almost all along shoreline

and most very weak; Hafun, 29 Apr, c. 100;

2 May, Habo (11.47N, 50.32E), 2; Tohen, 4 May, 6 fresh adults and 2

immatures found dead on a few hundred metres of beach; Cape Guardafui,

4 May, one fresh adult dead; 6 km south of Hengalol, 13 May, one dead

adult (inland); 23 km north of Garoe, 14 May, one dead adult (inland);

16 Jun - 12 Sep, birds at local breeding colony (Ash & Karani *op. cit.*);

24 Nov, one over sea.

1981: 6-25 Apr, 1 adult and 3 immatures on 4 d; 18-22 May, 3 immatures on 3 d.

5 Jun - 18 Jul, birds at local breeding colony (Ash & Karani *op. cit.*);

27 Sep, 2 at sea; 30 Sep, 1 at sea;

10 Oct, 1 at sea; 12 Oct, 35 adults at sea; 19 Oct, 2 adults over beach,

of which one collapsed in dunes; 20 Oct, 2 parties calling over town

at night at 21:30 and 23:00; 21 Oct, 1 immature over sea, 2 fresh adults

found dead, 2 parties calling over town at night at 19:20 and 21:10;

22 Oct, 1 fresh adult found dead, 73 adults and 3 immatures flew south

in 45 min; 24 Oct, one adult found dead, 1 ailing immature over dunes,

1 party calling over town at night at 23:45, c. 50 feeding over sea;

25 Oct, 3 adults and an immature flying around calling over beach,

c. 100 feeding over sea and moving on south; 26 Oct, c. 50 feeding over

sea; 28 Oct, a fresh dead adult on beach, c. 50 feeding over sea;

29 Oct - 9 Nov, no observations.

12 Nov, a dead immature bird on the dunes, 50+ fishing over sea (half

of them immatures); 13-15 Nov, 20-30 feeding daily over sea (half

immatures); 16 Nov, 300+ feeding over sea (40 per cent immatures);

18 Nov, 300 feeding over sea (70 per cent immatures); 19 Nov, 100

feeding over sea (80 per cent immatures); 21 Nov, 4; 22 Nov, 20.

SYMPATRIC OCCURRENCE OF THE WHITE-WINGED WARBLER *BRADYPTERUS*  
*CARPALIS* AND GRAUER'S RUSH WARBLER *B. GRAUERI* IN RWANDA

Jean-Pierre Vande weghe

Ten years ago, Chapin (1973) summarized what was then known of two large swamp dwelling warblers: the White-winged Warbler *Bradypterus carpalis* and Grauer's Rush Warbler *B. graueri*. She demonstrated, following Hall & Moreau (1970), that these two birds must be considered good species, contrary to the opinion of White (1960), who lumped them, together with *B. grandis*, the Large Rush Warbler, as a single species.

Chapin (*op. cit.*) concluded that the White-winged Warbler and Grauer's Rush Warbler occurred in Rwanda at sites separated by less than 50 miles (80 km), but situated at different altitudes. As a resident in Rwanda since 1969 I have had the opportunity to watch both species quite often, as they are common or locally common. Not only am I able to confirm Chapin's statements, but, more than that, I have found both species side by side in the Rugezi Swamps of northern Rwanda.

This discovery of sympatric occurrence prompts me to review what I have found in Rwanda and Burundi about these two little known species.

## WHITE-WINGED WARBLER

In a paper on the bird fauna of the papyrus swamps of Rwanda and Burundi I gave a detailed account of the distribution of the White-winged Warbler (Vande weghe 1981). Briefly, it can be stated that this species is an abundant resident in the extensive papyrus swamps of the Akagera Basin in central and eastern Rwanda. It occurs also at Mulindi swamp near the Uganda border and, until 1975, there was a very small population along Lake Kivu at the mouth of the Kamiranzovu river. Since that time, however, this swamp has been entirely cultivated. A few White-winged Warblers survived at least until 1976 in elephant grass *Pennisetum purpureum*, but today this population is apparently almost extinct. Generally speaking, this warbler is confined entirely to papyrus and can be considered as a good papyrus endemic. The single exception related by Chapin (1973) and my observations at the Kamiranzovu swamp in 1976 seem to be only a temporary outcome of large scale human interference.

In Rwanda, the altitudinal distribution of this warbler ranges from 1290 m up to 2050 m. It includes the very extensive swamps of the Akagera-Nyabarongo-Akanyaru system, where the total area of the papyrus can be estimated at about 50 000 or 60 000 ha. The total area suitable for this species is thus very large, despite its ecological requirements and limited geographical distribution.

## GRAUER'S RUSH WARBLER

Grauer's Rush Warbler has a much more localized distribution than *B. carpalis*. In southwest Rwanda it was collected in the Nyungwe (=Rugege) Forest (Schouteden 1969, Chapin 1973), where I found it to be abundant in the huge Upper Kamiranzovu Swamp at about 1900 to 2000 m and in numerous smaller and medium sized swamps of the eastern part of this forest between 2200 and 2600 m. In northern Rwanda I found the species to be very common in the Rugezi Swamp between 2050 and 2150 m. In the volcano area I saw it only once, in the saddle between Mts Sabyinyo and Gahinga on 16 August 1981. This was probably

the site at which it was collected by Schouteden (1966).

Generally speaking, this warbler occurs in Rwanda between 1950 and 2600 m. It inhabits a great variety of swamp vegetation types. I have seen it in short grass swamps with *Sphagnum*, *Xyris* and *Lobelia mildbreadtiana*, in swamps with medium sized sedges such as *Cyperus latifolius* or *C. denudatus*, *Juncus* and ferns, in long grass swamps with *Miscanthidium violaceum* and in swamps with dense scrubby vegetation composed of stands of *Myrica kandtiana*, *Erica kingaensis*, *Vaccinium stanleyi*, *Syzygium cordatum* and *Hypericum revolutum*. In the Nyungwe Forest I have seen it in very small isolated swamps surrounded by dense forest - this surely indicating that the species is able to penetrate forest along small watercourses. In northern Rwanda, however, it survives far from any forest remnant. In my opinion this warbler cannot be considered dependant on montane forest and thus cannot be considered as a 'forest species' as so regarded by Chapin (1932) and Prigogine (1978). Before large scale forest clearance, the central African highland swamps were usually surrounded by montane forest vegetation because of the general moist climatic conditions. The annual rainfall throughout most of this area is well over 1300 mm. True 'forest species' (*sensu* Moreau 1970) would be expected to disappear after forest clearance, but this has not happened in the case of Grauer's Rush Warbler.

The total area suitable for the species in Rwanda can be estimated at about 9000 ha. With its Kamiranzovu and Rugezi swamps, the country is thus probably the stronghold of this species. Unfortunately, the Rugezi Swamp is likely to be drained in the future and the Kamiranzovu Swamp is also the object of various development projects. One of these, however, concerns the conservation of the Nyungwe Forest, and it can be hoped that this swamp will be saved for the future.

#### HABITAT AND HABITS

The White-winged Warbler and Grauer's Rush Warbler are thus largely allopatric in Rwanda, separated mainly by altitude, but also by habitat choice. The only place where they meet is the Rugezi Swamp. This swamp is an inundated valley situated between 2050 m near its outlet and 2150 m at its headwaters. It covers an area of about 8500 ha, mostly covered with *Miscanthidium violaceum*, a tall reed. The edges are occupied by *Cyperus latifolius* stands (Deuse 1966) and near the outlet there is a large patch of papyrus. Grauer's Rush Warbler is very common in the *Miscanthidium* and in the *Cyperus latifolius*, where it is a dominant species together with Carruthers' *Cisticola cisticola carruthersi*. As elsewhere in Rwanda, the White-winged Warbler is strictly limited to papyrus. The transition from pure papyrus to *Miscanthidium* is, however, not very clear-cut, and areas occur where patches of papyrus are mixed with other reeds. Here, both warblers are in close contact with each other and singing males are sometimes separated by only a few metres. However, I have never noted any interaction between the two species.

The White-winged Warbler is a very secretive bird. It never emerges from the closed dense papyrus stands and, when small clearings are cut in this habitat, for example to erect mist-nets, it is very reluctant to cross these rides. Most of the time this bird creeps around in the lower layers of the papyrus vegetation among the dead and rotting stems. In its movements it tends to look more like a mouse than a bird. Body and tail are often held close to the support on which the bird is creeping with small jerky movements. The song is very characteristic, produced all the year round, and is one of the most typical sounds of the papyrus swamps. It consists of a succession of loud tinkling notes, starting slowly, becoming faster and louder and then dying away as a soft trill. At very close range some snoring wingbeats can



be heard just after the song. The bird then makes a short display flight within the more open middle layer of the papyrus vegetation.

Grauer's Rush Warbler can often be seen above the vegetation, and in shrubby habitat I often saw this species sitting high up on a prominent twig. Similar to the White-winged Warbler, it probably feeds mostly in the lower strata of its habitat, but when singing it climbs up to the top of a grass or reed and after uttering its short song it makes a short display flight with snapping wings, low over the vegetation. The song is quite different from that of the White-winged Warbler. It is a much slower succession of four or five, sometimes up to ten notes, soft, unmelodious and unobtrusive. When alarmed it makes jerky movements with its tail held upright. Outside the breeding season I have found small flocks of ten or twelve birds.

#### DISCUSSION

Although Hall & Moreau (1970) consider these two warblers as good species, they regard them as closely related and forming a superspecies, together with *Bradypterus grandis* of Gabon and Cameroun. I have never seen *B. grandis*, but I see no reason to include *B. carpalis* and *B. graueri* in a single superspecies. They are obviously related, but I would have thought not more closely than with the Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*. Their songs are very different, as are their plumages. The White-winged Warbler is larger and, with very large feet, well adapted to papyrus, to which it is endemic. Grauer's Rush Warbler is smaller, has normal feet and is much less specialized in its habitat choice. The White-winged Warbler has twelve tail feathers, Grauer's Rush Warbler only ten. On the other hand, the song of the White-winged Warbler is very close to that of the Little Rush Warbler, being a lower pitched emission of the same stanza. Both species have twelve tail feathers. Where they are sympatric, they are separated by size, and especially by habitat choice, but where the White-winged Warbler is absent the Little Rush Warbler also inhabits papyrus (Vande weghe 1981). The foot/wing-length ratio of the Little Rush Warbler is intermediate between that of the White-winged Warbler and that of Grauer's Rush Warbler.

The Little Rush Warbler and Grauer's Rush Warbler also share common attributes. The plumage of both species is very similar and they share a common type of habitat, being much more adaptable than the White-winged Warbler. In Rwanda they are mostly separated by altitude, but there are good indications that both species are in competition, or at least able to replace one another. In areas where Grauer's Rush Warbler occurs, I have never found the Little Rush Warbler above 2000 or 2100 m. At the Kamiranzovu Swamp, in the Nyungwe Forest at 1950 m, the Little Rush Warbler is completely absent, and at the Rugezi Swamp I found this species only sporadically along the edges of the lowest parts of the swamp. Where Grauer's Rush Warbler is absent, however, I found the Little Rush Warbler, up to 2500 m. Prigogine (1971) also found it up to 2600 m in the swamps of the Itombwe Highlands of eastern Zaire, where Grauer's Rush Warbler does not occur.

On the whole I consider the White-winged Warbler, the Little Rush Warbler and Grauer's Rush Warbler as forming a set of three independent but closely related species. The Little Rush Warbler is the smallest of the three, the most adaptable in the choice of its habitat and has the most extensive geographical distribution. It seems to be able to replace ecologically the two other species, which are much more specialized (one altitudinally, the other with respect to habitat choice) and which have very restricted geographical distributions.

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## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

## OLD RECORDS OF SOME SCARCE OR LITTLE-KNOWN SPECIES FROM KENYA

The following records of scarce or little-known species have come to light during researches associated with the Kenyan bird atlas scheme (Lewis & Pomeroi in prep.), and supplement data given in Britton (1980) and other sources.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

The following records of this species at Ziwa Estates, Hoey's Bridge (now Moi's Bridge, 0.57N, 35.08E) are extracted from a handwritten MS, endorsed by the late M.E.W. North, that is housed in the offices of the East African Natural History Society at the National Museum, Nairobi.

Winter 1947/48, 2 (no further details)

Winter 1950/51, 1 (no further details)

Winter 1956/57, 1 full plumage drake plus an immature  
Teal *Anas crecca*.

The highland locality and small numbers of individuals are typical of this duck in Kenya.

White-eyed Pochard *Aythya nyroca*

An adult male was present on a dam at El Karama Ranch (0.08N, 36.54E), near Nanyuki, on 26 January 1972 at a time when there were also large numbers of Pintail *Anas acuta*, Shoveler *Anas clypeata* and Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* in the area; a full and convincing description has been submitted by the observer (L.V.J. Grant in litt.).

Depending on the precise date of a bird collected at Lake Ol Bolossat during the winter of 1972/73, this constitutes the seventh or eighth record of this species for Kenya (Meadows & Pearson 1981).

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1957) recorded this species from Mt Kenya, but Britton (1980) was only able to quote a single, unconfirmed, recent record from the mountain, from the Sirimon track on 7 August 1975. The most recent confirmed record may thus be represented by a specimen in the collection of the National Museum, Nairobi: this is an adult female, collected by J.R.M. Tennent on 10 September 1961, from *Hagenia* woodland at 11 000 feet (3350 m) a.s.l., on the slopes of the mountain above Naro Moru (0.10S, 37.01E).

Hinde's Pied Babbler *Turdoides hindei*

The following records supplement those given by Plumb (1979):

1. in an undated MS entitled 'Kitui District, June 1960 to April 1961' kept by the East African Natural History Society, Nairobi, J.R.M. Tennent describes this species as "common in bushy valleys over 3,500' (=1066 m)". Plumb (1979) noted only one record from the Kitui area, that of a bird collected in 1918.

2. in the 1950s before 1956, P.M. Allen (pers. comm.) recorded this species as "quite common" on a farm a few miles west of Ruiru (1.09S, 36.58E), and observed one party feeding an immature Black and White Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*; a single bird of this species was again seen on this farm in 1956. These records extend the range of the species approximately 35 km west from Ol Donyo Sapuk (1.08S, 37.15E), where it was last encountered in 1970, and constitute the earliest record of this host (Plumb 1979).

Red-naped Bush Shrike *Laniarius ruficeps*

In October 1956, P.M. Allen (pers. comm.) observed "many" immatures in coastal

bush near Kiunga village (1.45S, 41.21E) in southeast Kenya, and the identification was confirmed by a specimen collected by M.E.W. North. Britton (1980) suggested that a sight record of several in the Mundane Range near Kiunga in August 1971 referred to the Somali coastal race *kismayensis*.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Adrian D. Lewis, Department of Geology, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi
- Received 29 March 1983
- Scopus* 7: 89-90, September/December 1983

#### A PAIR OF WHITE-BACKED NIGHT HERONS *GORSACHIUS LEUCONOTUS* IN SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK, TANZANIA

The White-backed Night Heron is a rarely seen bird anywhere within its range in East Africa (Britton 1980).

On 27 June 1981 we were camping in Serengeti National Park about 200 m west of the Kirawira Rangers' Post (c. 2.10S 34.30E), about 40 km east of Lake Victoria. Our campsite was on the left bank of the Grumeti River, near several unused National Parks' rondavels. The habitat is gallery forest with large trees, thick undergrowth and dense bushes bordering the river.

At about 06:30 MK approached the river bank and flushed what was immediately recognized as a White-backed Night Heron. The bird landed across the river, here about 10 m wide, and was promptly displaced by an Eastern Grey Plantain Eater *Crinifer zonurus*. Before flying off to MK's side of the river again it raised its crest slightly and fanned out its white scapulars. A few minutes later, from a very dense overhanging bush about 15 m downstream, the heron was flushed again, this time followed by another; both birds landed across the river in the tree where the first bird was originally sighted. The two birds were watched for about 20 min until they walked deeper into the vegetation.

They were rather deliberate and seemed unconcerned about the presence of an observer. They recalled the Neotropical Boat-billed Heron *Cochlearius cochlearius* in their demeanour.

The rufous colour of the breast was more vibrant than expected, the white back plumes always visible, the white chin and the eye ring very conspicuous, even on the bird sitting in the shadows; the crest was flat against the nape except at one point, when the presumed male initiated a courtship gesture: facing the other bird with slightly lowered head, it partially raised its crest and fanned out its pure white lanceolated scapulars in a shallow V. This behaviour lasted two or three minutes until, eventually the bird walked slowly into the shadows.

Returning to the site a short time later with PA, we flushed one heron from the same dense bush on the left bank; it landed across the stream in the same

tree, affording another, more obstructed view.

According to recent literature (e.g. Schmidl 1982), this appears to be the first record for the Serengeti National Park.

#### REFERENCE

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Michel Kleinbaum, 245 West 107th Street, New York, NY 10025 and Peter Alden, Westport, CT 06880, U.S.A.

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*Scopus* 7: 90-91, September/December 1983

#### SUCCESSFUL BREEDING OF GREATER FLAMINGO *PHOENICOPTERUS RUBER* AT LAKE NAKURU, KENYA

Greater Flamingos breed irregularly at several lakes in East Africa. At Lake Nakuru from 1951-71, flamingos attempted breeding - unsuccessfully - only once, in 1963 (Brown et al. 1973). No further breeding was observed there after 1971 (Vareschi 1978, D. Schmidl and P. Wirtz pers. comm., and authors' obs.). The only recorded successful breeding by the Greater Flamingo took place in 1915 and 1936 (Meinertzhagen 1958).

Numbers of Lesser (*Phoeniconaias minor*) and Greater Flamingos declined to a few hundreds by early 1980 and continued to be low until 1982, when numbers increased rapidly in May and June to between 200 000 and 500 000. In the meantime large numbers of Lesser Flamingos gathered at Lake Bogoria where they attempted to breed from December 1980 to June 1981. However, no fledglings were recorded. All breeding attempts failed, obviously due to the slowly falling water level and/or to disturbance through tourists walking too close to the colony.

After the flamingos returned to Lake Nakuru they were always present in great numbers, and at least the Greater bred there successfully early in 1983. The first two grey downy chicks were seen on 27 March near the causeway at the southern end of the lake. On 3 April 35-40 downy chicks were seen below Lion Hill Camp and 15 others were seen on 6th at the north shore. The two downy chicks seen first were still following their parents, which constantly gave contact calls, and one of the young on 3rd was seen to be fed by a Greater Flamingo. Among the grey young no distinctly lighter ones were seen (lighter coloured chicks might have indicated successful breeding of the smaller species (Brown 1955)).

Small groups of Lesser and Greater Flamingos engaged in nest-building around the lake until at least mid June. The largest concentration was near the main gate of the Park where, on 5 June, one egg was seen in a nest after the flamingos had been disturbed by tourists walking too close to the colony. In June, however, the water level had receded noticeably and most nests were no longer surrounded by water, making another successful breeding most unlikely.

All young were seen far away from any nesting colony, which means they were at least 10 d old, perhaps even 1-2 weeks older. Given an approximate incubation period of 30 d (Bauer & Glutz 1966), eggs must have been laid no later than the first half of February, or even in late January 1983. The fairly constant water level from July 1982 to March 1983 was certainly conducive to this successful breeding of flamingos at Lake Nakuru, the first recorded since 1951. It is astonishing that breeding succeeded despite the many Marabous *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* which are attracted to the lake in large numbers by the open rubbish dumps of Lake Nakuru Lodge.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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UNUSUAL PREY OF LIZARD BUZZARD *KAUPIFALCO MONOGRAMMICUS*

Brown et al. (1982) summarize the diet of the Lizard Buzzard as consisting mainly of insects and small reptiles, amphibians and mammals; molluscs, arachnids and small birds are also occasionally taken. The following observation, submitted in response to requests for data for the Kenyan bird atlas (Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.), therefore appears highly unusual.

On 21 December 1982, while driving through plantations along the southern side of the entrance of Kilifi Creek (3.39S, 39.52E) in coastal Kenya, E. Culwick and G.G. Gynn flushed a Lizard Buzzard that was feeding on a White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus* on the track. The raptor was heavily burdened by this unusually large prey, and just managed to fly with it to the low branch of a nearby tree, where it continued feeding; clear views in this exposed position allowed positive identification of both species. In view of the coucal's somewhat sluggish habits and the fact that the two birds were first observed on a motorable track, the slight possibility must remain that the raptor did not actually kill this large prey but found it as a recent road-kill; however, the standard reference literature makes no mention of the Lizard Buzzard taking already dead items.

I am very grateful to the observers for the use of their unpublished observations.

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Received 16 June 1983

*Scopus* 7: 92, September/December 1983

KESTREL *FALCO TINNUNCULUS* FEEDING ON A BAT

The Kestrel is known to feed by co-operative hunting on bats Chiroptera, as well as on birds (Cramp & Simmons 1980). The following observation is of interest as records of Kestrels eating bats in East Africa seem uncommon, and the species of bat involved have not, until now, been identified.

At 10:30 on 22 October 1981 I watched a pair of Kestrels chase, catch and eat a Yellow-winged Bat *Lavia frons*. The habitat was acacia bush to the west of Lake Baringo. Although the agile bat was able to elude the Kestrels for some three or four minutes, by hunting together the falcons swooped at it in turns and eventually damaged one of its wings with their talons. The bat then fell to the ground and was promptly killed by the female Kestrel, which, after standing over her prey for a few seconds, flew to a nearby acacia tree and began to eat the bat. The male Kestrel then flew around calling excitedly for about two minutes before heading off towards a nearby cliff. The Kestrels were of the local resident race *rufescens*.

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Terry Stevenson, Lake Baringo Club, Box 47557, Nairobi.

*Scopus* 7: 93, September/December 1983

Received 16 June 1983

A BLACKSMITH/SPUR-WINGED PLOVER *VANELLUS ARMATUS* × *V. SPINOSUS* HYBRID?

On 17 December 1982 N.J. Davidson and I watched a very strange looking plover which accompanied two Blacksmith Plovers *Vanellus armatus* just outside the Ziwani Gate of Tsavo National Park (West). We observed this bird for about half an hour at distances down to some 20 m. Its plumage appeared to be intermediate between that of a Blacksmith and a Spur-winged Plover *V. spinosus* (see Fig. 1). However, it was identical in size and behaviour to the accompanying Blacksmiths, and in fact behaved as if closely attached to one of these birds, while the second kept slightly apart. It differed from a Blacksmith as follows: the top of the head was black from forehead to nape and extending to just below the eye; black extended further back on the flanks and sides of the belly but was otherwise confined to the chin, throat and centre of the neck and breast, the sides of the neck and breast being white; apart from a black centre to the mantle the whole upperparts were buffish-grey and there was no black in the scapulars. The eye was reddish, the secondaries and uppertail coverts white and the primaries and tail black. The bird appeared to be adult and was assumed to have been a *V. armatus* × *V. spinosus* hybrid. Ziwani is only about 70 km southeast of Amboseli where these two closely related but typically allopatric species have been recorded nesting on the same ground (Reynolds 1980).

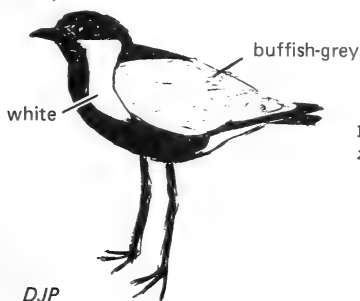


Fig. 1. Probable hybrid Blacksmith × Spur-winged Plover

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PEARL-BREASTED SWALLOW *HIRUNDO DIMIDIATA* IN SOUTHWESTERN  
TANZANIA AND NORTHEASTERN ZAMBIA

Moyer (1983) gives a record of the Pearl-breasted Swallow from southwestern Tanzania at 8.30S, 31.40E in 1980, and comments that the only other East African record is from Malangali, also in Tanzania at 8.25S, 33.50E; he also mentions a record of this swallow at Kasama, Zambia (10.10S, 31.10E), 160 km to the south of his locality, but he provides no other evidence of the bird's occurrence in the Zambia/Tanzania border area.

The single record quoted for NE Zambia does not accurately reflect this species' status and range in the area. The race *marwitzi* (type locality Malangali, Tanzania) of the Pearl-breasted Swallow is apparently resident in Zambia and is associated with miombo woodland, occurring over clearings and at woodland edges, but is also found over swampy ground; it is widespread but normally rather sparse (Benson et al. 1971).

In May 1976 C.A. Taylor and I encountered this species in small numbers at the edge of miombo woodland in Mbala District, Zambia, between 8.40S, 31.25E and 9.00S, 31.25E, some 35 to 60 km southwest of Moyer's locality at Lake Sundu, Tanzania. Between 1975 and 1981 the Zambian Ornithological Society Newsletters also gave several records of this swallow from infrequently watched areas of NE Zambia, including Isoka District (approximately 10.00S, 32.40E) and Kasama District. These records suggest that the Pearl-breasted Swallow may be widespread in NE Zambia up to the Tanzanian border, and it is therefore likely that the bird is present in miombo woodland from the border north and east, at least to the two known Tanzanian localities. Its status in SW Tanzania is unlikely to differ from that in NE Zambia if the habitat is similar, and it is undoubtedly more widespread and frequent than the present Tanzanian records suggest.

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MOYER, D.C. 1983. A record of the Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata* from Lake Sundu in southwestern Tanzania. *Scopus* 7: 51.

P.B. Taylor, Box 25138, Nairobi

Received 7 November 1983

*Scopus* 7: 94, September/December 1983

A LEUCISTIC COMMON BULBUL *PYCNONOTUS BARBATUS*

On 19 June 1983, while collecting data for the Kenya bird atlas (Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.), F.A.D., G.M. and P.R.A. Davey and myself observed a leucistic Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus tricolor*. This was on Kiboko Estate (1.06S, 37.18E), near Thika, Kenya, and the bird had been seen in the vicinity for several months (F.A.D. Davey pers. comm.).

It was pure white except for a pale yellow vent and dark soft parts, and



specific identification was based upon its size, structure, vent colour and crested head.

Britton (1969) recorded the incidence of albinism in the ornithological collection of the National Museum, Nairobi, and in the birds that he had handled during netting (primarily for ringing) in Kenya. He noted that Common Bulbuls show a higher incidence of partial/total albinism than the other species he examined, and this point is supported by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960) and McLachlan & Liversidge (1978), who mention the phenomenon in this species.

Three leucistic Common Bulbuls from Kenya in the collection of the National Museum, Nairobi, show lesser development of albinism than the Thika bird and, in over nine years of familiarity with this species in several countries, I have never seen it display pigment loss so strikingly.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very grateful to G.R. Cunningham-van Someren for access to the collection of the National Museum, Nairobi.

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- Adrian D. Lewis, Department of Geology, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi
- Received 20 July 1983
- Scopus* 7: 94-95, September/December 1983

#### EASTERN-BEARDED SCRUB ROBIN *CERCOTRICHAS QUADRIVIRGATA* BATHING IN A TREE HOLE

During the early morning of 19 December 1982 I was sitting in the Pugu Hills forest near Dar es Salaam observing territorial behaviour of the East Coast Akalat *Sheppardia gunningi*.

During a lull in akalat activity I was attracted to a fluttering movement some 20 m from where I sat. Careful positioning gave me excellent views of an Eastern Bearded Scrub Robin sitting at the entrance to a hole about a metre above the ground in the bole of a small tree. The bird fluffed out its breast feathers, spread its wings as far as practical and lowered itself backwards into the hole. While this was suggestive of brooding, I was surprised at the choice of nest site and even more puzzled when, after a minute or two, it jumped out on to the lip of the hole. It immediately began shaking and preening before again returning backwards into the hole. Using binoculars and with an increase in ambient light, I could make out quite energetic movements inside the hole. Within a minute or two it again jumped to the lip of the hole and continued preening. I was convinced that the bird had not seen me and its behaviour was completely natural. This was confirmed when the akalat returned and my movement disturbed the scrub robin, which flew away giving its alarm note.

An inspection of the hole several minutes later revealed it to be a rot hole with a distinct lower lip. Water had collected in the hole and was evidently being used for bathing.

The Pugu Hills forest is situated at the northeastern tip of a range of low hills running northeast and petering out only 15 km from Dar es Salaam and the sea. Although the forest receives more rain than the surrounding coastal plain, the surface soil is rather sandy and few puddles are left after even heavy rain showers. The nearest permanent water is 600 m away and outside the forest. It seems likely that the use of suitable tree holes for bathing is a regular occurrence among forest birds in such habitats. A search through available literature failed to trace a similar habit among this or related species.

N.E. Baker, Box 1599, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Received 31 October 1983

*Scopus* 7: 95-96, September/December 1983

FURTHER RECORDS OF THE WHITE-THROATED FORM OF THE  
PIED WHEATEAR *OENANTHE PLESCHANKA* FROM KENYA

Pearson & Backhurst (1979) recorded two occurrences of the rare white-throated form of the Pied Wheatear from southern Kenya; these were apparently the first records of this morph in the Afrotropical region. As a result of researches associated with the Kenyan bird atlas scheme (Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.), the following further records of this form have been reported from Kenya by D.J. Pearson and P.J. Squelch:

1 adult male by the Morun River, just below the Marich Pass (1.32N, 35.27E) on 15 February 1981 (PJS)

1 first year male at Kariobangi Sewage Farm, Nairobi from 9 to 12 February 1982 (DJP)

1 adult male at 3.15N, 35.28E on the Lodwar-Lokitaung road on 13 December 1982 (PJS).

The descriptions submitted in support of the two records from northern Kenya stress the black lores and ear coverts which contrasted strongly with the silver-grey crown and nape, and with the white throat. The black mantles of these birds distinguished them from the similar white-throated form of the Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica* and, at this time of year, denoted that both birds were adult. While the 1981 bird was white from chin to vent, the 1982 individual had the diffuse rufous breast band often shown by this species (D.J. Pearson pers. comm.).

The plumage of the Kariobangi individual was identical to that of the similarly aged birds described by Pearson & Backhurst (1979).

I am very grateful to David Pearson and to Peter Squelch for the use of their observations, and for their support in the atlas project generally.

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Adrian D. Lewis, Department of Geology, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi

Received 10 May 1983

*Scopus* 7: 96, September/December 1983

BILL ABNORMALITY IN A BLACK FLYCATCHER *MELAEORNIS EDOLIODES*

Since February 1983 until the present (November 1983), a Black Flycatcher with a malformed lower mandible has been observed frequently in the garden of my house at Makerere University, Kampala. Although the upper mandible appears normal, the distal part of the lower mandible is strongly curved to the left (Fig. 1A), and slightly decurved as well (Fig. 1B).



Fig. 1. Abnormal bill of a Black Flycatcher  
A: dorsal view B: lateral view

Bill abnormalities are quite common in birds (see, for example Pomeroy 1962), although lateral curvature is unusual. However, I know of no previous record for this species.

The bird's plumage appears rather bedraggled, presumably because it has difficulty in preening, but its survival for at least nine months suggests that it is able to feed adequately; such an abnormality in a warbler, for example, would severely reduce the bird's ability to peck at insects. The flycatcher has been seen catching aerial insects on several occasions, and its behaviour seems typical of the species.

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D.E. Pomeroy, Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda

Received 9 November 1983

*Scopus* 7: 97, September/December 1983

A SECOND RECORD OF THE NUBIAN SHRIKE *LANIUS NUBICUS* IN EAST AFRICA

In the late evening of 6 December 1982 I flushed an unfamiliar shrike from long grass near the northwest shore of Lake Baringo, Kenya. The bird immediately flew into some acacia bush and was not located again. The following morning I returned to the area and straight away found an immature Nubian Shrike. The bird was observed through 10 x 40 binoculars for over an hour, as it perched on low acacia bushes and occasionally swooped to the ground to catch insects. The initial impression was of a slim long tailed shrike with greyish brown upperparts, dark eye stripe and very white face when seen head-on. The following description was taken: crown and nape greyish brown with tiny white flecks; face, line above the eye, chin, breast and underparts white; broad dark line from the eye to the nape and a smaller dark spot between the eye and bill; mantle uniform brown but showed faint white flecks at close range similar in colour to the crown and nape; scapulars and patch at base of primaries white, however, the latter was only visible in flight or when the bird stretched a wing; remainder of primaries and secondaries blackish brown noticeably darker than the mantle, lesser and median upper wing coverts plain brown, greater upper wing coverts distinctly black, edged with very pale brown, primary coverts similar although not forming such a distinct panel: tail noticeably long and dark brown (darker than mantle) with white outer feathers;

soft parts - bill pale greyish brown, pinkish at the base, legs bluish grey.

When perched the bird frequently waved and swung its tail, several times it was observed hovering above long grass while looking for prey and, during this activity an area of pale apricot colour could be seen on the flanks.

The bird was present in the area until 28 February 1983 and during its stay the eye stripe, crown, nape, mantle and wings became darker and the apricot colour richer and more extensive. The bird was only heard to call on one occasion, when a harsh, but quiet *crret crret* sound was made as it swooped to the ground.

The only previous East African record was an immature collected at Lake Kanyaboli, western Kenya, on 9 November 1969 (Britton 1970), however, this species is a common winter visitor from the Palaearctic to the Sudan and Ethiopia (Nikolaus 1983). Britton (1980) remarks that it can be expected in northern Uganda and northern Kenya. The present record is the first of a Nubian Shrike wintering in East Africa. During the three months when it was present identification was confirmed by many observers including D.J. Pearson and G.L. Clarke.

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*Terry Stevenson, Lake Baringo Club, Box 47557, Nairobi*

*Scopus* 7: 97-98, September/December 1983

Received 16 June 1983

#### ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *ONYCHOGNATHUS FULGIDUS* THE CHESTNUT-WINGED STARLING IN TANZANIA

Britton (1980) restricts the range of this species in East Africa to Uganda. It has, in fact, occurred in Tanzania but the record has unfortunately remained unpublished for many years.

In May 1956 I found a small party in forest at the west end of Ukerewe Island (1.55S, 32.45E) in Lake Victoria. In the dense foliage of the tall trees it was impossible to tell exactly how many birds were present as they moved about feeding, apparently on the fruit of *Maesopsis eminii*, but from the calls there were probably not more than four to six birds.

My attention had been drawn to them by the noisy squawks and raucous cries from high up in the trees. The calls often had a parrot-like quality, as noted by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1957), but glimpses of chestnut wings as the birds moved about proved the true origin of the calls. A good view of one bird was eventually obtained. The glossy dark purplish blue plumage, the chestnut primaries and the moderately long graduated tail, coupled with the distinctive calls, left me in little doubt that the bird was *O. fulgidus*.

Hall & Moreau (1970) show a plot for the Red-winged Starling *O. morio* from an area south of Lake Victoria, a considerable distance from the species' more typical localities in Tanzania. I was very familiar with *O. morio* and the birds on Ukerewe were rather slimmer, smaller, and the calls were certainly not those of *O. morio*.

Nor could it have been Waller's Chestnut-winged Starling *O. walleri* or the Slender-billed Chestnut-winged Starling *O. tenuirostris*, both birds of high-land areas, the first of quite different form and the second of much different habitat.

I therefore concluded at the time, and I still believe, that the birds on

Ukerewe were *O. fulgidus*, and as such, a first record for Tanzania. They may have wandered from their habitual territories in western or southern-central Uganda, or just possibly may have been resident on the island. If the forest still exists, and that is somewhat questionable, it might make a visit worthwhile for a local ornithologist.

N.R. Fuggles-Couchman, Post House, High Street, Broughton, Stockbridge, SO20 8AA, Hants, England

Received 10 July 1983

*Scopus* 7: 98-99, September/December 1983

#### ON THE BREEDING OF THE RED-HEADED QUELEA *QUELEA ERYTHROPS* IN TANZANIA

I was extremely interested in C.C.H. Elliott's paper (1983) on his aerial birds-nesting, during which he rediscovered the breeding haunts of the Red-headed Quelea in Kilosa District, and established the true extent of the colonies. The breeding of *Quelea* spp., especially *Q. erythroptus*, in large numbers in the great Tindiga swamps to the east and southeast (surely not northeast as stated by Elliott) of Kilosa township has been long-known, if ill-documented, and the size of the colonies had never been fully appreciated. But neither his record nor that given by Taylor (1981) constitute the first record of this species breeding in East Africa.

From November 1951 to May 1952 I lived at Kilingali, on the western edge of the swamps, when making trials of the mechanical cultivation of irrigated rice in that area. I was particularly anxious about the proximity of nesting colonies of *Q. erythroptus*, with a much smaller number of *Q. quelea*, on the very edge of the rice fields, in the *Typha* reedbeds. During an earlier tour of service in Kilosa District I had had experience of the damage they could do in African rice fields, and had seen the damage caused by *Q. quelea* in large-scale wheat production, when very large flocks arrived on the Ardaai Plains in northern Tanzania in 1944, destroying 1500 ha of wheat in the Northern Province War Wheat Scheme fields there.

The main interest in the breeding colony of *Q. erythroptus* at Kilingali is that it offered an opportunity to carry out the first experiments in East Africa in the use of explosives to control *Quelea*, following methods developed in the Sudan. The results of those trials appeared in the *East African Agricultural Journal* (Fuggles-Couchman 1952) and it is in that report that, to the best of my knowledge, the first record of the nesting of *Q. erythroptus* in East Africa was published, and the nesting habits briefly described. It was unfortunate that notice of the breeding did not appear later in an ornithological journal, but at the time my interest was entirely concerned with the control of the birds, and the fact that that was apparently the first record of the breeding of the species in East Africa did not strike me until much later.

In 1932-35 I was told by African rice growers in the area around Kilosa and the swamp that the *Quelea* nested in the Tindiga swamps and on the Mkata Plains, but during that time I was never able to investigate those areas during the breeding season. But when studying species attacking rice fields at Kilingali in 1935 (Fuggles-Couchman 1936) I found that the flocks of *Q. erythroptus* contained many immatures, giving some support to the Africans' reports of local breeding.

I have records of this species in Kilosa District from November to May inclusive, and again in July and August, with the largest concentrations in the period February to May. In June 1952 the birds seemed to leave the Kilingali area, only to reappear in small numbers in July and August. I have no records

of them from anywhere in the district for September and October, at the height of the dry season.

In 1952 some nest-building had started in the *Typha* beds on 31 January, but the main breeding period was in March. On 17 March all nests examined contained eggs, 99 per cent of those counted holding a clutch of two, the remainder having from three to as many as five eggs. Many of the eggs were on the point of hatching. Part of the colony, which covered at least 1 ha, was destroyed by explosives on 21 March.

In addition to the main nesting in the swamp, a colony was found in 2.5 m-high *Panicum maximum* grass on dry ground a few kilometres from the swamp, out on the plains. Nesting in grass *Rottboellia* sp. at Lupiro, Ulango District, was also recorded in April 1954.

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- Received 30 August 1983
- Scopus* 7: 99-100, September/December 1983

#### REVIEWS

*The birds of Africa* Volume I, by L.H. Brown, E.K. Urban and K. Newman, pp. xix + 521 + 32 plates (most coloured), line drawings and numerous maps. Hardback. London and New York: Academic Press. £53.40. 1982.

This is the first of a set of four volumes which, when complete, will cover the avifauna of the entire African continent. It is the first of its type to deal with the continent as a whole and is a tribute to the late Leslie Brown who sadly died before the publication of this first volume.

As shown in the Acknowledgements, many leading authorities on various groups and families have co-operated and critically examined the early drafts of this volume and, as such, the wealth of knowledge drawn from ornithologists both throughout the continent and in other countries make this first volume a truly team production.

A 28-page Introduction gives readers a concise and informative overview into

- the main features of the African bird faunas, complete with topographical and vegetation maps
- some suggestions for future research on African birds
- a detailed account of the scope, content and layout of this first volume.

Readers are advised that this new handbook is prepared by field ornithologists mainly for field ornithologists, though taxonomy and systematics have not been completely forgotten. All species accounts include details covering range and status, description, field characters, voice, general habits, food

and breeding habits. Major references for each species are also given at the end of each species account.

There is a map for each species, but sadly, on closer inspection, many are found to be inaccurate and misleading. Certainly more attention to detail and accuracy should have been paid to such an important feature of the book, and one that most readers glance at first. To cite a few examples from an East African viewpoint: Black Heron, Saddle-billed Stork, Glossy Ibis, White-backed Duck, Pygmy Goose, Cape Wigeon, Osprey, Hooded Vulture and Booted Eagle are all shown as occurring throughout Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, yet such species as Bat Hawk, Swallow-tailed Kite, African Fish Eagle and African Marsh Harrier are shown as being generally or almost totally absent from Kenya. In other cases maps show distribution in countries where the species has not even been recorded: Cassin's Hawk Eagle is shown as occurring over a sizeable portion of western Tanzania, yet there are no records at all from that country. Bean Goose is shown as a vagrant in Nigeria, when in fact the record was from central Mali. Similarly the inclusion of a dubious record of the Red Kite from South Africa is unfortunate, as this has now been officially deleted from the southern African list; there is still no record of this species from sub-Saharan Africa.

The plates by Martin Woodcock and Peter Hayman are generally of a high standard, with the colour reproduction and printing equally so. One minor point that possibly too many species are crammed into some plates, particularly Anatidae, can be voiced. Also, whether so many Palaearctic species, found only in the extreme north of Africa warrant inclusion in full colour when they are only marginally represented on the continent is questionable. I feel that it is unfortunate that the four plates of birds of prey in flight are in black and white; they would have been so much more meaningful and more useful as a flight identification guide had they been in colour. I personally see little use in having any black and white plates in any bird book, especially in a major handbook such as this.

This first volume ends with a fine and detailed bibliography covering both general and regional references, as well as references for each of the families covered in the volume. This section of the book will certainly be welcomed by all readers and researchers.

The printing of the book is of an extremely high quality, and hopefully the irritations I found with the maps will be rectified in the three future volumes. I am sure that the new joint editors of Volumes 2 to 4, ably assisted by their editorial advisory board will set as high a standard as possible in the forthcoming volumes, and incorporate the vast amount of knowledge that, over the decades, has been scattered through dozens of journals and other publications, many of which are simply not available to workers in Africa. It is to be hoped that the publishers will not delay too long in the publication of the future volumes; costs of bird books seem to increase in leaps and bounds, and such an important and major reference work will, we all hope, be within the reach of all pockets.

All the volumes in this series will be a handsome gift for anyone with an interest in African birds, and will grace any library, bookshelf or coffee table.

D.A. Turner

*Ostrich Index Vols 21-50, 1951-1979*, by L.P. Phipson and G.L. Maclean, pp. iv + 225. Softback. Johannesburg: Southern African Ornithological Society. US\$15 or £6.00. 1983.

A most useful compilation which will greatly ease the labour of ornithologists seeking references to African birds. The book is nicely produced, in *Ostrich*

(journal) size, in two-column format covering both English and scientific names in the one list. I hope that more Old World journals will follow this example.

G.C. Backhurst

## REQUESTS FOR RECORDS OF PALAEARCTIC MIGRANTS

### JANUARY DUCK COUNTS

As part of an international exercise co-ordinated by the International Wildfowl Research Bureau we are continuing to collect all available counts of Palaearctic duck in Kenya during the month of January. The aim is to produce a January figure for each species - Pintail, Shoveler, Garganey, Teal, Wigeon, Tufted Duck, Ferruginous Duck - for each mapping square. The grid in use is the UTM grid which produces squares of approximately 20 km in width. We shall eventually average such annual counts or estimates as we have for each species for a given square from the data which have been accumulating since 1977.

The details of the mapping system need not concern the potential contributor to this scheme too much, for in Kenya most ducks visit concentrated bodies of water which can easily be identified and reconciled with the grid by the compilers. What we require are records, with numbers, from a given dam, lake, or specified part of lakeshore. Some areas in central Kenya have been quite well covered, but further counts (accurate or approximate) from sections of such lakes as Naivasha, Ol Bolossat or Solai would be welcome. Records of even small parties of ducks from less well known areas would be extremely welcome, and we would be particularly interested in counts from any specified part of Lake Turkana. Finally, if you watch birds in an area where Palaearctic ducks just don't occur, it would be very useful to know this. We need this type of negative information to complete our survey.

David Pearson, Department of Biochemistry, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi and Brian Meadows, 2 Naze Court, Old Hall Lane, Walton-on-the Naze, Essex, England.

### PALAEARCTIC MIGRATION IN KENYA AND UGANDA

I am planning to review the available information on Palaearctic migrants in Kenya and Uganda. I am intending to map distributions using the  $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$ -degree square grid as explained and numbered by Turner (*Scopus* 5: 38-40).

I envisage a mapping system that goes further than that currently in use for the Kenya Distributional Atlas (Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.) in that:

- I'm concerned with dates. I need to know whether records are for a chosen 'winter' period (1 January to 20 March), for 'autumn' (up to December) or for 'spring' (from 21 March onwards). The period January to mid March has been chosen as a time when passage movement is minimal in our area in most of the visiting Palaearctic species.
- I'm distinguishing two levels of abundance. The problem with mapping migrants is that they can turn up occasionally almost anywhere, so that in a well watched square almost all species will be recorded in time. It is therefore necessary to distinguish species occurring in appreciable numbers from those simply recorded in a square once or twice. My two categories are therefore:
  1. Common to abundant: it would usually be possible to find 10 or more individuals per day in the square.
  2. Recorded, but not known to be common to abundant as defined above.



Thus, if a species occurs in a square I need to know the period or periods involved (autumn, winter, spring), and whether or not it was common to abundant. I would be pleased to supply sheets on which this information could be entered, either as data consolidated over several years, or as data for any particular year. An example of the use of this mapping system may be found in my review of the *Acrocephalus* warblers in Kenya and Uganda (*Scopus* 6: 49-59).

Casual records of migrants, especially from less well worked areas, could be very useful, even if they refer to quite common species. Lists of migrants from short excursions to a given site or square would also be most welcome, so long as some indication of numbers is given. Please get in touch if you would like to help and need data sheets, or if you would like more information on just what records would be useful. All correspondence will be answered.

David Pearson, Department of Biochemistry, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi.

## NOTICES

### 6th PAN AFRICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS BOTSWANA 1985

Arrangements are currently underway with a view to holding the next PAOC in Francistown, Botswana, possibly over the Easter holiday period in April 1985.

- Participants/Delegates resident in the Republic of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia are requested to write direct to Ken Newman, Box 65426, Benmore 2010, South Africa for further details, and to be placed on his PAOC mailing list.
- Participants/Delegates resident in North America, Europe, Asia, Australasia and Africa (other than those countries mentioned above) are requested to write direct to D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi, Kenya for further details and to be placed on his mailing list.

It is to be stressed that this is merely a preliminary announcement; further details will be available during the first half of 1984.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO *SCOPUS*

Notes for contributors to *Scopus* are given inside the covers of each number, however, there are one or two points which we would like to stress, although contributors are still asked to read the full text inside the covers as well before sending in their contributions.

- Please send all contributions to the Editor, G.C. Backhurst, Box 24702, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Send them in duplicate.
- All contributions will be acknowledged.
- All contributions will be assessed by members of the Ornithological Sub-Committee of the East African Natural History Society and/or by independent referees.

- If references to the literature are given, *names of journals must be given in full; names of books must include the publishers and town of publication.*
- A number of frequently quoted works need not be listed in the list of references; their titles are given inside the back cover. The purpose of this is to save space. Occasionally, particularly in long papers, all references will be printed at the end of the paper, at the Editor's discretion.

Recently a number of submissions have been received which do not conform to the standards of content or presentation which can reasonably be expected. The Editor and other members of the OS-C cannot be expected to rewrite such contributions for authors, even if the material may warrant publication. On the other hand, potential contributors who are not experienced in writing scientific papers (or whose first language is not English) will be given every encouragement and help if they intend submitting to *Scopus*, if they contact the Editor or other members of the OS-C beforehand.

Please help us to maintain the standard of *Scopus* and spend just a few minutes making sure that your paper or short communication follows the small number of simple rules set out for your guidance. Thank you.

Ed.

#### EAST AFRICAN BIRD REPORT

A page was omitted from the 1982 Report (*Scopus* 6, November 1983) by mistake; we are sorry about this. The page (p. 116A) has now been printed and will have either been inserted in your report or included with this issue.

Please remember that all records for the 1983 Report should reach the recorders (addresses opposite) by the end of February 1984.

Ed.

in the case of books, the town of publication and the publisher should be given. A number of works, which are cited frequently, should not be listed under 'References'; the name(s) of the author(s) and date(s) of publication should be given in the text in the normal way.

All contributions, which will be acknowledged, should be sent to the Editor, G.C. Backhurst, Box 24702, Nairobi, Kenya.

#### WORKS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE LISTED UNDER 'REFERENCES'

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#### EAST AFRICAN BIRD REPORT

This forms the fifth issue of *Scopus* and each report covers one calendar year. Records of Afrotropical Region (i.e. Ethiopian Region and Malagasy Sub-Region) and Oceanic birds should be sent to D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi; records of Palaearctic Region birds to Dr D.J. Pearson, Department of Biochemistry, Box 30197, Nairobi. Records should be sent in early in the new year to ensure the speedy production of the Bird Report. Reports of rare birds may be telephoned through to any OS-C member (numbers inside front cover) in the hope that the bird(s) may be seen by others. Criteria covering the submission of Bird Report records are given in *Scopus* Supplement, June 1982, copies of which are available from D.A. Turner.

#### BIRDS OF EAST AFRICA

Copies of this 270-page book are available from the Secretary, EANHS, Box 44486, Nairobi for £8.00 or US\$17.00 surface mail to anywhere in the world.

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# *SCOPUS*

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*Edited by*

Graeme Backhurst



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# SCOPUS

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Tables, which should be numbered, *should appear in the typescript, NOT grouped on separate sheets at the end*. Metric units should be used.

Illustrations should be on good quality white paper, bristol board or tracing material, in line, and should not be larger than 19 x 23 cm. Lettering (in black) will be the responsibility of the author and should be done neatly in Letraset (or similar), no larger than 14 point (3.9 mm). Each illustration should be numbered (Fig. 1, etc.) and be provided with a legend typed on a separate sheet of paper. Photographs will also be considered.

Any references cited should be listed at the end of the contribution following the form used in this issue. Names of periodicals *MUST* be given in full and,

*Continued inside back cover*

# SCOPUS

## GENERAL REVIEW

Nineteen eighty-three was especially noteworthy for the best supply of records from Uganda for at least twelve years, the result largely of the observations and travels of J.S. Ash. In Kenya, the small band of local contributors provided coverage mainly of coastal, central and southwestern areas, whilst in Tanzania, resident observers were again active around Arusha, Dar-es-Salaam and Mufindi.

Two species, Broad-billed Prion *Pachyptila vittata* and Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*, were added to the East African list during the year. Both were seen close inshore off Ras Ngomeni, north of Malindi. Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes* was also new to Kenya, whilst Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* and Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* were new to Uganda. Also worthy of special mention were occurrences of Turtle Dove, Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* and Nubian Shrike *Lanius nubicus* in inland Kenya and White-tailed Tropicbirds *Phaethon lepturus* and Black-browed Albatrosses *Diomedea melanophris* off the Kenya coast. A male Streaky-breasted Pygmy Crane *Sarothrura boehmi* obtained at night at Mufindi was the first proper record for Tanzania, while Sun Larks *Galerida modesta* found in extreme northwest Uganda were the first to be recorded in East Africa for a great many years.

In Kenya, the year began with lakes and swamps full and most bushland and grassland areas exceptionally green after the heavy rain of late 1982. Flooding in the lower Tana valley resulted in unusually timed breeding in the Garsen heronry. However, these wet conditions attracted few Palaearctic ducks in traditional highland wintering areas, and in the rift valley, habitat suitable for migrant waders was limited. Hot, dry weather prevailed, broken only by one rainy week in mid February, until early April, and most of the lower areas of the country became dry and parched. The long rains did not begin in central and eastern areas until mid April, and these were generally rather poor. In these dry conditions a heavy northward passerine migration, featuring Willow Warblers *Phylloscopus trochilus* and Red-backed Shrikes *Lanius collurio* in particular, was observed at Nakuru, Naivasha, Baringo and Nairobi over the first three weeks of April. Lesser Kestrels *Falco naumanni*, unusually common in the Nairobi-Kajiado-Sultan Hamud grasslands from late February, reached peak numbers in early to mid April when they were accompanied by small numbers of Eastern Red-footed Falcons *Falco amurensis*.

Otherwise, however, little northward raptor migration was recorded. On the coast, there was a conspicuous movement of Eurasian Cuckoos *Cuculus canorus*, with accompanying Lesser Cuckoos *C. poliocephalus* and Black and White Cuckoos *Clamator jacobinus*, during mid to late April. Quite heavy rains were experienced here between late April and August, and after further flooding from the river, the Garsen heronry was active again in June.

Inland, many areas had become dry by August, and exceedingly so by October. After little inflow during April - August, the rift valley lakes were receding later in the year. Extensive muddy edges at Nakuru attracted thousands of Grey-headed Gulls *Larus cirrocephalus*, amongst which appeared Black-headed Gulls *L. ridibundus* and a few Slender-billed Gulls *L. genei*. Here, too, Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* numbers increased to hundreds of thousands, with much display activity, and large packs of Shovelers *Anas clypeata* appeared at the end of the year. Passerine passage was already well under way in central and eastern areas when the short rains broke rather belatedly during mid to late November. These rains were patchy and of short duration, but much of the country received a further week of rain in late December. The clear weather of late October and early November resulted in fewer than usual sightings of migrating falcons and eagles. However, flocks of Eastern Red-footed Falcons were again encountered in the Taita Hills/Tsavo N.P. (E) area during storms later in November, and hundreds of *Aquila* spp., mostly Steppe Eagles *A. nipalensis*, were found in the Mara feeding on termites during the late December wet spell.

We are grateful to contributors for the response to our request for records to be sent within two months of the end of the year. As a result it has been possible to produce this report in good time. Any acceptable records received late will, of course, appear in the Back Records section of the 1984 report.

We have introduced one change this year. Previous reports have included an annual summary of material received during the year by the EANHNS Nest Record Scheme. We now feel, however, that reports of this scheme, with their recently expanded format, should be produced at appropriate intervals as separate Society publications, as has always been the case with the Ringing Report. The omission of a nest records section from this report has allowed us space to expand some of the species accounts, and give editorial comments where appropriate. In future reports we shall publish consolidated summaries of records of selected species. Those to which we shall pay special attention during 1984/85 are listed at the end of the Species Report. We would be grateful if contributors could send us all records of these species for 1984.

The adjudication of all records in this and previous East African Bird Reports has been the responsibility of Kenya-based members of the Sub-Committee. It has become clear, however, that the authority of future reports would be enhanced by the establishment of a broader-based Rarities Committee including members based outside East Africa. We hope that such a committee will be set up by July 1984. We intend to refer to it all records of species new to any of the East African countries, all sight records of S(A) species and any other important records whose acceptance or rejection poses a problem. Contributors are again reminded that records of scarce species, or of substantial range extensions, must be accompanied by appropriate supporting details. For S(A) species which cannot be caught or photographed, corroboration should be sought whenever possible from a second independent observer.

D.J. Pearson, Chairman, Ornithological Sub-Committee, E.A.N.H.S.



## SPECIES REPORT

This report covers the three countries Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Records are included under one or more categories, indicated by code letters as follows:

- S(A): SCARCE species in category A (five or fewer previous records from East Africa); all records of such species are published.
- S(B): SCARCE species in category B (six to 25 previous records from East Africa); all records of such species are published.
- R: Species of interest whose status in East Africa requires clarification, and for which ALL records are REQUESTED. Records may be listed or summarized in full each year, or reviewed after several years.
- E: Records showing an EXTENSION of range, or from areas where the species is decidedly uncommon to scarce.
- N: Records included for their NUMERICAL interest, either of particularly large numbers or of careful counts.
- D: Records of migrants where DATES are of interest.
- B: Records of BREEDING interest, from new or unusual areas or involving interesting numerical elements.
- M: Records of MISCELLANEOUS interest.

Records of Afrotropical and Oceanic species were collated by D.A. Turner, and those of Palaearctic species by D.J. Pearson.

## AFROTROPICAL AND OCEANIC SPECIES

## PODICIPEDIDAE: Grebes

*Podiceps nigricollis* Black-necked Grebe R: 30+ L. Bogoria, 1 May; 2 L. Nakuru, 11-12 Aug; 20 L. Naivasha, 21 Aug; 3 L. Nakuru, 26 Dec (DAT, DEW, JM). In Tanzania: 8 Arusha NP, 25 Oct (AJB) and a few L. Masek (Serengeti), 27 Oct (DAT).

*Tachybaptus ruficollis* Little Grebe M: Several at Magadi, 20 Feb (DKR) on newly formed soda pool after a few days of rain; unusual in this environment. Also 1 netted at night, hot springs at southern end of L. Magadi, 14 May (DJP et al.).

## DIOMEDEIDAE: Albatrosses

*Diomedea melanophris* Black-browed Albatross S(A): immatures in Pemba Channel off Shimon, 12 Sep and 10 Oct (PH, MH). Details recorded exclude all other possibilities except immature Grey-headed Albatross *D. chrysostoma* which, however, rarely occurs north of 35S.

## PROCELLARIIDAE: Petrels, shearwaters

*Puffinila vittata* Broad-billed Prion S(A): 1 off Ras Ngomeni, 10 Sep (MACC, DJP).

The third record of a prion off the East African coast but the first to have been identified to species - see Scopus 8: 43-44.

*Puffinus lherminieri* Audubon's Shearwater S(B): 100+ off Ras Ngomeni, 18 Jun (MACC, DJP), and a few off Watamu, 29-30 Dec (DAT).

*Puffinus pacificus* Wedge-tailed Shearwater S(A): 2 Ras Ngomeni, 23 Apr (MACC,

DJP) and 1 off Watamu, 30 Dec (DAT).

The first definite records for East Africa - see Scopus 8: 24.

*Puffinus* sp. a shearwater off Shimoni, 15 Sep was thought to have been a Wedge-tailed *P. pacificus* (PH, MH).

HYDROBATIDAE: Storm Petrels

*Oceanites oceanicus* Wilson's Storm Petrel S(B): 1 off Watamu, 26 Dec (DAT).

PHAETHONTIDAE: Tropicbirds

*Phaethon lepturus* White-tailed Tropicbird S(B): single adults off Shimoni, 6 and 14 Sep (PH, MH) and at Malindi, 11 Nov (MP).

SULIDAE: Boobies

*Sula dactylatra* Masked Booby R: several hundreds, including immatures, at Latham Is, off Dar es Salaam, 16 Dec (NEB).

ANHINGIDAE: Darters

*Anhinga rufa* Darter B: many nests at Garsen, 12 Jan and 19 Jun (MACC, DJP).

FREGATIDAE: Frigatebirds

*Fregata* sp. an immature off Ras Ngomeni, 23 Apr (MACC, DJP).

ARDEIDAE: Herons, bitterns, egrets

*Ixobrychus minutus payesii* Little Bittern R: ones and twos of the African race recorded in Kenya at Athi River (4 May), L. Baringo (May - early Oct), Ngomeni (Sep) and near Siaport, Busia District (Sep) (MACC, JHF, MK, TS, DEW). In Tanzania singles recorded at Mbarali Rice Scheme, Bahi and Dodoma during Mar (JSSB).

*Ixobrychus sturmii* Dwarf Bittern R: in Tanzania singles at Seronera River, 22 Feb (PCL) and Mbarali Rice Scheme, 15 Dec (EMB).

In Uganda singles on the Bokora Plain (Lango), 18 Jun, near Kitgum, 25 Jun and at Kibimba, 21 Jul (JSA).

*Ardea purpurea* Purple Heron B: 750+ nests, Garsen, 12 Jan (MACC, DJP).

50+ at Kapiri, Teso, Uganda on 11 Nov was an unusual concentration, possibly indicating breeding in the area (JSA).

*Ardeola idae* Madagascar Squacco Heron R: singles Nairobi NP, 17 Jul and 4 Sep, and at Athi River, 24 Sep, up to 4 Thika OPs, 26 May - 16 Oct, 2 Limuru, 25 Sep, 2 Lake Nakuru during Aug; in Tanzania, 2 at Dar es Salaam, 3 Jul (NEB, PCF, DJP, MES, DAT, DEW).

*Ardeola ralloides* Squacco Heron B: 450+ nests, Garsen, 12 Jan and 100+ there, 19 Jun (MACC, DJP).

*Ardeola rufiventris* Rufous-bellied Heron R: 3-6 on a small lake near Siaport (Busia), 25 May (FRL, GKR) and 1 there, 21 Sep (JHF, MK). 1 near Thika, 3 Jul (FRL, PBT) and 1 in the northwestern corner of Mara GR, 19 Aug (DEW). In Uganda, 1 near Nakasongola, 13 Oct and 1 near Kinoni (Ankole), 14 Dec (JSA). In Tanzania, 1 Upper Ruw Valley, 14 Jul and 2 Bagamoyo, 23 Jul are the first recent records from the coast region. Further south notable concentrations were 80+ Mbarali Rice Scheme and 50+ Usungu Flats, both on 12 Mar (JSSB).

*Bubulcus ibis* Cattle Egret B: 1400+ nests, Garsen, 19 Jun (MACC, DJP).

*Egretta alba* Great White Egret B: 200+ nests, Garsen, 12 Jan (MACC, DJP).

*Egretta ardesiaca* Black Heron R, B: resident at Gazi with max. of 30 on 9 Apr (MACC), singles Amboseli, 7 May, Lake Nakuru, 19 Mar, and Lake Naivasha, 21 Aug (JHF, DKR, DEW). A few nesting at Garsen, 12 Jan and 19 Jun (MACC, DJP).

In Tanzania, up to 100 on the Usangu Flats, Feb-Mar, and several at Dodoma, 18 Mar (JSSB).

*Egretta gularis* African Reef Heron R: dark phase at Ngomeni, 23 Apr (MACC, DJP), and pale birds at Lake Nakuru, Jan-Mar and Nov (DKR, DAT), Lake Baringo 13-15 Jan (TS) and Mida Creek, where there were two on 26 Nov (MACC, DJP).

*Egretta intermedia* Yellow-billed Egret B: 1500+ nests, Garsen, 12 Jan and 400+ there on 19 Jun (MACC, DJP).

#### CICONIIDAE: Storks

*Anastomus lamelligerus* Open-billed Stork B: 200+ nests, Garsen, 12 Jan and a few 19 Jun (MACC, DJP). E: 1 Nairobi NP, 13 Mar was unusual there (DKR).

*Ciconia abdimii* Abdim's Stork D, N: recorded in Kenya to 27 Apr and from 5 Nov. Largest flocks in Uganda were 750 at Kibimba, 20 Feb and 100 Entebbe, 5 Mar followed by 5000+ near Soroti, 11 Nov, 1600 Serere (Teso) on 17 Nov and hundred in the Entebbe area, late Nov (JSA). In Kenya the largest concentration was 900 at Amboseli on 27 Feb (MEJG).

*As a passage migrant this species is regular in large flocks in Uganda during Nov and late Feb to early Mar.*

*Ciconia episcopus* Woolly-necked Stork E: in inland Kenya up to 7 in Nairobi NP Mar to Apr and Jun to Oct, 4 Samburu GR, 24 Jun and 6 Mara GR, 27 Dec (DKR, DEW). In Uganda, scattered records from Kidepo, Kabalega Falls NP, Entebbe, Kibimba, Ankole and Masaka (JSA).

#### THRESKIORNITHIDAE: Ibises, spoonbills

*Plegadis falcinellus* Glossy Ibis B: 50+ nests, Garsen, 12 Jan (MACC, DJP).

*Threskiornis aethiopica* Sacred Ibis B: several nests in borassus palms, Butiaba, Uganda, 12 Oct (JSA).

*Platalea alba* African Spoonbill B: 100+ nests, Garsen, 12 Jan (MACC, DJP).

#### PHOENICOPTERIDAE: Flamingos

*Phoeniconaias minor* Lesser Flamingo E: single immature at Mufindi, southern Tanzania, 9 Nov (EMB).

#### ANATIDAE: Ducks, geese

*Dendrocygna bicolor* Fulvous Whistling Duck N: 2500 Tana Bridge, 5 Feb and 1250 there on 3 Aug (DJP, DEW). 1500 Ahero Rice Scheme, 11 Feb (DJP).

*Dendrocygna viduata* White-faced Whistling Duck N: 2500 Tana Bridge, 3 Aug and 2000 there on 6 Oct (DJP, AEB, DEW).

*Anas sparsa* African Black Duck E: 2 wanderers on the Tiva River, Tsavo East NP in mid Jun (JSSB).

*Netta erythrophthalma* Southern Pochard N: 2000+ on a pool at the south end of Lake Nakuru, 8 Oct (DJP). 260+ Lake Ngwazi, Mufindi area, southern Tanzania on 9 Dec (NEB).

*Nettapus auritus* African Pygmy Goose R: 12 on Ngogoni Dam, Gazi, 19 Mar (MACC), 2 on a roadside pool beside the Mombasa - Kilifi road, 7 Jul and 2 at Malindi Golf Course pools, 10 Jul (MK, GKR et al.). 1 adult with 3 immatures Lake Baringo, 5 May, and with 2 immatures up to 17 May (ADL, TS). In Tanzania, several Usangu Flats, 13 Mar (JSSB) and 18 on Kihanga Dam, Mufindi District, 4 Nov (AJB, EMB).

*Plectropterus gambensis* Spur-winged Goose N: 400+ Mbarali Rice Scheme, southern Tanzania, 1 Aug (AJB).

*Sarkidiornis melanotos* Knob-billed Duck N: 700 Tana Bridge, 5 Feb (DJP) but only 50+ there on 3 Aug (DEW), 700+ Ahero Rice Scheme, 11 Feb (DJP). In Tanzania, 150+ at Mbarali Rice Scheme on 1 Aug (AJB).

*Thalassornis leuconotus* White-backed Duck M: now appears to be absent from Lake Jipe, possibly due to over silting (DAT).

SAGITTARIIDAE: Secretary Bird

*Sagittarius serpentarius* Secretary Bird E: 1 Ruaha NP, southern Tanzania, 3 Jul, and up to four recorded there on several occasions Jul to early Sep (AJB, EMB).

*The first records from Ruaha NP.*

ACCIPITRIDAE: Birds of Prey

*Gypaetus barbatus* Lammergeyer R: 1 Kibichbich, Cheranganis, 9 Aug (JHF).

*Accipiter minullus* Little Sparrowhawk R: records received from several observers from Malindi (Aug), Soko Forest (Dec), Kapedo (Oct, Nov), near Kisoro, Uganda (Dec), near Arusha (Jan to Apr), Mbarali (Mar), Kilosa (Apr) and Mufindi (several months).

*Aquila verreauxi* Verreaux's Eagle R: 1 some 30 km S of Kondo, Tanzania, 26 Apr (JSSB). (Kenya sites not listed.)

*Aquila wahlbergi* Wahlberg's Eagle N: a total of 376 observed flying south in 1 h from 11:45, at Pakuba, Kabalega Falls NP, 5 Aug (JSA).

*Butastur rufipennis* Grasshopper Buzzard R: singles Meru NP, 5 Nov (DAT) and near Ukasi (Thika - Garissa road), 21 Nov (DJP). Also several Mtito Andei/Voi, 19 Nov (DAT) and near MacKinnon Road, 27 Nov (DJP). 6+ Kalalu Ranch (Kilifi District), 26 Nov (MACC, DJP) and 2 near Voi, 24 Dec (JHF). In Tanzania, 1 Ngorongoro, 24 Feb (PCL), 2 Mufindi, 10 Dec and 5 Iringa - Mikumi NP, 11 Dec (NEB, AJB, EMB).

*Buteo auguralis* Red-necked Buzzard R: 1 60 km north of Lira (Uganda), 14 Nov well to the east of all previous records (JSA).

*Hieraaetus dubius* Ayres' Hawk Eagle E: in Uganda, recorded at Entebbe, 16 Oct, and 28 km east of Lira, 13 Nov, the latter a quite recently fledged juvenile (JSA).

*Kaupifalco monogrammicus* Lizard Buzzard E: recorded in inland Kenya at Nairobi (Jun and Sep), Athi River (Oct) and Saiwa Swamp (Jul) (ADL, PCF, DJP, DKR).

*Melierax metabates* Dark Chanting Goshawk E: in Uganda it was found to be common from 29 km NW of Moroto to Kidepo NP and extended west, probably continuously across into NW Uganda, where it was again found to be common (JSA).

*Aviceda cuculoides* Cuckoo Hawk R: in the Nairobi area, regular at Lavinton, Jun to Sep (PCF). Adult with 2 immatures, Masai Lodge, 21 Jul (JHF) and singles recorded at Olulua during Aug and Sep (DKR). At the coast, 3 in Murafa Forest, N of the Sabaki River, 21 Jun (MACC, DJP) and 1 at Malindi, 12 Sep (TS) and 1 at Mariakani, 18 Aug (DAT). In the Masai Mara, 1 on 6 Sep (MK et al.). In Tanzania, several Mikumi NP, Jun and Jul and several in the Arusha area, Apr and May (NEB, EMB, AJB, JSSB).

*Chelictinia riocourii* Swallow-tailed Kite R: recorded at the Kedong Valley site in several months, and a pair found breeding there in Sep and Oct (see *Scopus* 8: 25-26). Elsewhere, 1 Dida Galgalla desert, 20 May (FRL, GKR), 2 Lokichoggio, 11 Jun (PS) and two over wheatfields, Timau, 24 Oct (DAT).

*Macheiramphus alcinus* Bat Hawk R: several records from Lake Baringo, Jan, May and Oct, Tsavo East NP, Jan, Lake Nakuru, May, Diani, Mar, Shimba Hills, May, Gede, Jul, Malindi, Jul and Aug and Morogoro (Tanzania), Jun.

#### FALCONIDAE: Falcons

*Falco alopex* Fox Kestrel R: singles at Kakuma, 13 Feb (PS), around Kapedo in May and on 14 Jul and at Lokichoggio, 7 Sep (JHj).

*Falco chiquera* Red-necked Falcon E: singles near Kapedo, 12 Jul (JHj) and near Kilosa, Tanzania, 7 May (JSSB).

*Falco cuvieri* African Hobby E: Tanzania records from the Pugu Hills (Jan), Arusha area (Mar and Apr), Makuyuni (Jun), Dar es Salaam (Sep), Mufindi (Nov) and Njombe (Nov).

*Falco dickinsoni* Dickinson's Kestrel E: 1 Nairobi NP, 17-18 Aug (WR) - photographs supplied.

*This is only the third record for Kenya.*

*Falco rupicoloides* White-eyed Kestrel E, N: 40+ northern Dida Galgalla desert, 20 May (FRL, GKR).

*Polihiarax semitorquatus* Pygmy Falcon E: a female at Igawa, southern Tanzania, 1 Aug (AJB).

#### PHASIANIDAE: Quails, francolins

*Coturnix chinensis* Blue Quail R: a pair near Uleppi (West Nile, Uganda), 7 Aug (JSA).

*Coturnix coturnix erlangeri* Quail E, M: a bird of this race caught at night inside Ngulia Lodge was the first of this species to be recorded there (GCB, AMF-W, DJP, JHF).

*Francolinus jacksoni* Jackson's Francolin E: 1 at 3300 m on Mt Elgon, 8 Feb (DJP).

*There appear to be only two previous records from Mt Elgon.*

*Francolinus levaillantii* Red-winged Francolin R: 2 recorded from Mufindi grasslands, southern Tanzania, 6 Aug (AJB).

*Ptilopachus petrosus* Stone Partridge R: 4 at Kongelai, 18 Jul (ADL, PCF) and many calling on the Losiolo escarpment, north of Maralal, 17 Oct (FA).

#### NUMIDIDAE: Guineafowls

*Guttera edouardi* Crested Guineafowl E: 7-8 Kabarnet Forest, 19 May (ADL, TS).

*Guttera pucherani* Kenya Crested Guineafowl E: several groups (max. 14 birds) Mwanihana Forest, southern Tanzania, 9-12 Jul (AJB).

#### TURNICIDAE: Button Quails

*Turnix sylvatica* Button Quail M: 1 on soda flats at Lake Magadi, 16 Dec (DJP). E: widespread in Uganda in Kidepo, Kabelega Falls NP and Rwenzori NP and near Soroti and Kampala. Also 2 at Rom (northern Karamoja) 24 Jun, 1 at Adwari (Lango), 13 Nov and 3 Chepsekunia (Sebei), 21 Nov (JSA).

#### RALLIDAE: Rails, crakes

*Crex egregia* African Crake R: 1 near the Tiva River, Tsavo East NP, mid Jan (JSSB), 1 Malindi Golf Course, 9 Jul (MK, GA, JB). In Tanzania, several on the Usangu Flats Feb and Mar, a few Dodoma swamps, Mar, around Shinyanga in late Apr, several on the Mkata Plains, Kilosa area in early May (JSSB). 2 at night in mist at Mufindi, 12 and 15 May and 1 at Mbarali Rice Scheme 15 Dec (EMB). In Uganda, 1 Rwenzori NP, 9 May, 1 near Ngora (Teso) 17 Jun, 1 Kidepo NP 20 Jun and 13 there on 23 Jun; no less than 68 along 54 km of

road to the south of Lake Albert, 17 Aug; 1 at Entebbe, 27 Dec (all JSA).

*Gallinula angulata* Lesser Moorhen E: 1 in seasonal swamp near Kapedo, 4 Sep (JHj).

ME: 1 grounded in mist at Mufindi, southern Tanzania, 13 May (EMB). In Uganda, 1 Kajanse near Kampala, 13 Mar, 12+ at Kibimba 16 Jun and 2 there on 4 Jul, common at 18 km NE of Soroti, 18 Jun, 1 Kidepo NP, 23 Jun, 1 near Kitgum, 23 Jun, 1 Okole (Lango), 26 Jun, several near Bar (Lango), 27 Jun and 2 at Tiriri (Teso), 27 Jun (all JSA).

*This concentration of Uganda records between 16 Jun and 4 Jul is particularly interesting as there were only two previous Uganda sites.*

*Porphyrio alleni* Allen's Gallinule R (away from the Kenya coast): occurred seasonally at Lake Baringo as usual with 20+ Mar to May and 80+ Jun to Sep (TS), 2 on a small pool near Siaport (Busia) 21 Sep (MK, GA, JB). In Tanzania, several in swamps and rice paddies Usangu Flats, 11-12 Mar (JSSB). In Uganda, recorded 16 Jun to 4 Jul as follows: 20+ Kibimba 16 Jun and 2 there on 4 Jul, 1 near Ngora (Teso) 17 Jun, common 18 km N of Soroti 18 Jun, several Kidepo NP 22 Jun, several near Bar (Lango) 27 Jun, 2 Walisa (Teso) 2 Jul (all JSA).

*Porzana marginalis* Striped Crake R: 1 Kimondi Swamp near Kapsabet 1 May (LS).

*Rallus caerulescens* African Water Rail E: in Uganda, 1 in Kidepo NP on 23 Jun represented a considerable extension of known range (JSA).

*Sarothrura boehmi* Streaky-breasted Pygmy Crake S(B): a male caught at night on 5 May at Mufindi, southern Tanzania, is now in the British Museum, Tring (NEB, EMB) and an account is in press for *Scopus*.

*The first definite record for Tanzania*

*Sarothrura rufa* Red-chested Pygmy Crake R: present at Tengeru near Arusha between Jan and May (JSSB).

#### OTIDIDAE: Bustards

*Neotis denhami* Denham's Bustard E (Kenya and Tanzania records): 5 or more resident in the Aitong area of the Mara GR, with male displaying in Nov (TS, DAT). A pair displaying at Mugie, Laikipia plateau 4-5 May with small numbers resident there at least from May to Sep (TS), 1 in wheatfields near Timau 5 Aug (DEW). In Tanzania, 2 near Mtera Dam 18 Mar (JSSB) and a pair in the Serengeti NP in Oct (DAT).

#### JACANIDAE: Jacanas

*Microparra capensis* Lesser Jacana E: fairly common resident at Lake Ngwasi, Mufindi, southern Tanzania with 20+ there on 24 Jul (AJB, EMB).

#### ROSTRATULIDAE: Painted Snipes

*Rostratula benghalensis* Painted Snipe R: records from the Tiva River, Tsavo East NP (Jan), Amboseli NP (Feb), Lake Baringo (Mar, Jul, Aug), Marich Pass (Mar) and Mwea Rice Scheme (Jul). In Tanzania, recorded at Ilonga near Kilosa (Oct) and from the Mbarali Rice Scheme (Oct).

#### CHARADRIIDAE: Plovers

*Vanellus crassirostris* Long-toed Plover E: several on the Usangu Flats, southern Tanzania during Mar (JSSB).

*Vanellus lugubris* Senegal Plover E: 50+ Meru NP in early Nov (DAT).

B: pair with 2 young about 14 d old at Entebbe 4 Sep and another pair there also with 2 young (3 to 4 weeks old) 27 Nov (JSA). Pair in distraction display at Nabugabo (Masaka) 21 and 22 Oct may also have had young (all JSA).

*Vanellus melanopterus* Black-winged Plover E: 100+ Mara GR, 24-27 Dec (DKR).

DROMADIDAE: Crab Plover

*Dromas ardeola* Crab Plover M: flock of about 30 flying off Shimoni towards Pemba Island, 18 Oct (PH, MH).

GLAREOLIDAE: Coursers, pratincoles

*Rhinoptilus chalcopterus* Violet-tipped Courser R: 1 Kondoa, Tanzania, 1 Mar (JSSB).

*Glareola ocularis* Madagascar Pratincole N, D: 2500+ Sabaki River mouth, 22 Apr (MACC, DJP).

LARIDAE: Gulls, terns

*Larus hemprichii* Sooty Gull D: recorded in the Diani - Galu area of the south Kenya coast up to 22 May and from 28 Sep, but odd birds still present at Ras Ngomeni (north coast), 19 Jun (MACC).

*Anous stolidus* Common Noddy R: 5-6 off Shimoni 27 Aug (MACC, DJP, TS, DAT), 1 Galu beach 24 Nov (MACC) and 3-4 off Watamu 30 Dec (DAT). In Tanzania, several thousands (presumed breeding) Latham Island 16 Dec (NEB).

*Anous tenuirostris* Lesser Noddy S(B): 2-3 off Shimoni 27 Aug and 7+ off Malindi 11 Sep (MACC, DJP, TS).

*Chlidonias hybridus* Whiskered Tern B: 7 or more pairs bred Lari swamp, Limuru, late Jan - Feb, with some chicks reared (DJP), while near Eldoret 10 or more pairs bred Oct - Nov (LS).

*Sterna anaethetus* Bridled Tern R: 6-7 off Shimoni 27 Aug, 30+ off Malindi 11 Sep and 2 off Watamu 30 Dec (MACC, DJP, TS, DAT) were the only records received.

*Sterna bergii* Crested Tern N: max. count 70 at Ras Ngomeni 23 Apr (MACC, DJP).

*Sterna dougallii* Roseate Tern N: 20 Ras Ngomeni 18-19 Jun, 350 Galu in breeding plumage 3 Jul, 200 in breeding plumage at Kilifi 16 Aug, 20+ off Shimoni 27 Aug and about 50 off Malindi 11 Sep (MACC, DJP, TS, DAT).

B: several hundred pairs bred on Whale Island off Mida Creek during Jul and Aug (DAT).

*Sterna fuscata* Sooty Tern R: 2-3 Ras Ngomeni 18 Jun, 100+ off Malindi 11 Sep and 3 off Watamu 30 Dec were the only Kenya records (MACC, DJP, TS, DAT). In Tanzania, a few thousands (presumed breeding) at Latham Island 16 Dec (NEB).

*Sterna repressa* White-cheeked Tern R: hundreds at Ras Ngomeni 23 Apr with many in full or partial breeding plumage (MACC, DJP) and 200 Galu (south coast) in partial breeding plumage 22 May and 100 there on 3 Jul (MACC). Other records received were: 10 Ras Ngomeni 18-19 Jun, ones and twos along the south coast 16-20 Aug, 1 off Shimoni 27 Aug, 6 off Malindi 11 Sep, 4-5 Malindi fish harbour 23 Nov, 1 off Watamu 30 Dec (MACC, DJP, TS, DAT).

RYNCHOPIDAE: Skimmers

*Rynchops flavirostris* African Skimmer R: 8-10 Sabaki River mouth from mid Jul to mid Aug (MK et al.) but only 2 there by 26 Nov (MACC). Singles Lake Jipe Aug to Nov (DAT) and Athi River 24 Sep (DJP); about 20 Lake Baringo mid Mar (TS) and 700+ Ferguson's Gulf, Lake Turkana, late Oct (TS).

In Tanzania, 15+ Ruaha NP from Jun to Sep (AJB). In Uganda, about 120 Lake George 11 May (JSA).

## COLUMBIDAE: Pigeons, doves

*Columba guinea* Speckled Pigeon N: 300+ Wilson Airport, Nairobi, 27 Apr (DKR).

*Columba unincincta* Afep Pigeon R: fairly common Kibale Forest, Uganda, during May (JSA).

*Streptopelia vinacea* Vinaceous Dove R: recorded in Uganda south to the Hoima, Nakasongola and Soroti areas (JSA).

*Treron waalia* Bruce's Green Pigeon R: in northern Uganda fairly common in the Kabalega Falls NP and around Moyo (West Nile) during Aug. One about 30 km S of Kitgum 25 Jun, 2 to the south of Arua 7 Aug, and recorded in several localities in south Acholi during Nov. Some overlap with the Green Pigeon *T. australis* at 2-3N in the west (all records: JSA).

## PSITTACIDAE: Parrots, lovebirds

*Psittacus erithacus* Grey Parrot E: flock of 14 over Yala River in non-forest habitat 12 Nov (DAT).

## CUCULIDAE: Cuckoos, coucals

*Clamator glandarius* Great Spotted Cuckoo R: several records from Meru NP (Apr), Naivasha (May), Lake Baringo (Apr to Jun and a few Oct and Nov), Nairobi (Apr). In Uganda, at Chepsekunia (Sebei) during Nov and near Mbarara (Dec).

*Clamator jacobinus* Black and White Cuckoo R: records from Bissel (late Mar), Nairobi, Amboseli and coast (Apr) and Nakuru (early May) and in Tsavo and along the Mwingi - Garissa road (late Nov - Dec) were all of birds with white underparts. All-black birds were seen at Meru NP 3 Apr and near Loitokitok 14 May (DJP, DAT). Two different birds at Naivasha 8 May were dusky below (presumed *serratus*) (DJP).

In Tanzania a few were present in Mikumi NP 29 Apr and 1 May (NEB).

*Clamator levaillantii* Levaillant's Cuckoo R: singles Tsavo East NP mid Jan, Langata (Nairobi) 22 Apr, Kongelai 18 Jul, Kakamega 13 Sep and Machakos 27 Nov (JSSB, PCF, JHF, MK, GA, JB, LB, ADL).

In Tanzania, singles at Usangu Flats in Feb and Mar and at Dodoma 18 Mar (JSSB).

*Cuculus clamosus* Black Cuckoo R: Kenya records from Kakamega (Feb, Sep), Bissel (Mar), Tsavo West NP (Mar), Kongelai (Jul), Kapedo - Loruk (Sep, Oct), Lake Baringo (Oct), Mwingi - Ukasi (Nov, Dec) and Mara GR (Dec).

In Tanzania heard near Kilosa in Nov (PJM). Widely distributed in Uganda in the west and southwest, also near Lake Victoria, but also recorded near Kitgum 25 Jan, near Karuma Falls (Lango) 26 Jun, near Bar (Lango) 27 Jun and near Gulu 11 Aug (JSA).

*Cuculus gularis* African Cuckoo R: in Kenya, records from Kajiado and Bissel in Mar, Marigat and Lake Baringo in Aug, Kapedo - Loruk from Sep to Nov, Garissa in Nov (a juvenile) and from MacKinnon Road, also in Nov (PCF, JHJ, DJP, DEW). In Tanzania, a few in the Kilosa area 1 to 10 May (JSSB) and singles at Mufindi 15 Mar and 14 Nov (AJB) and Njombe 7 Nov (EMB). In Uganda, 1 near Tororo 24 Apr and a pair calling and displaying near Mbarara 12 Dec (JSA).

*Cuculus poliocephalus* Lesser Cuckoo R: a male in *Acacia* woodland at Lake Nakuru on 2 May was in generally worn plumage and was therefore assumed to have been of the Madagascar race *rochii* (DJP).

*Centropus grillii* Black Coucal R: 1 in breeding plumage Meru NP 3 Aug (DAT) was unusual in the middle of the dry season. In Tanzania, several in breeding plumage Serengeti Feb (PCL), and 1 Morogoro 13 Mar (AJB).



*Centropus senegalensis* Senegal Coucal E: present Mbarali Rice Scheme, southern Tanzania 31 Mar and a pair near Ruaha NP HQ on 24 Dec (PJM).

TYTONIDAE: Barn Owls

*Tyto capensis* Cape Grass Owl R: a pair breeding near Ol Donyo Sabuk during Feb (PED). In Tanzania, 1 near Makambako 26 Nov (NEB, EMB).

STRIGIDAE: Owls

*Otus ireneae* Sokoke Scops Owl R: common in suitable habitat in Sokoke Forest, with as many as 9 birds/km<sup>2</sup> in some parts. Total Sokoke population thought possibly to exceed 1000 pairs (UEA-ICBP Exped.).

*Otus leucotis* White-faced Scops Owl R: pair Meru NP 2-3 Aug (DAT), 1 dead on road 35km N of the Marich Pass 14 Jan (PS). In Tanzania, a single bird at Dar es Salaam 24 Jun (NEB).

*Scotopelia peli* Pel's Fishing Owl R: 1 observed near Bushwhackers Camp on the Athi River, 18 Jul (SH, DS).

CAPRIMULGIDAE: Nightjars

*Caprimulgus fraenatus* Dusky Nightjar R: records from the Laikipia plateau (May), Nairobi NP (Oct - road-kill) and Ngulia (early Dec) (GCB, AS, TS).

*Caprimulgus inornatus* Plain Nightjar R: 2 caught in early Dec at Ngulia (GCB). In Uganda, 1 30 km NW of Moroto 20 June (dead) and 1 Lutembo, Kampala, 10 Jul (JSA).

*Caprimulgus nubicus* Nubian Nightjar R: 3 caught at Ngulia in early Dec (GCB).

*Macrodipteryx vexillarius* Pennant-winged Nightjar R: 1 near Kapedo 1 Sep (JHj).

APODIDAE: Swifts

*Apus aequatorialis* Mottled Swift N: flock of 75+ drinking from roadside pool near Marigat 7 Aug (DAT).

*Apus melba* Alpine Swift E: in Tanzania, 7+ Mbarali Rice Scheme 1 Aug (AJB). In the Mufindi area 25+ on 30 Sep and 30+ on 4 Oct were the first records from this locality (EMB, AJB).

*Apus horus* Horus Swift E: in Uganda, many at Mweya, Rwenzori NP 9-10 May (JSA).

COLIIDAE: Mousebirds

*Colius leucocephalus* White-headed Mousebird E: small party near the Tiva River, Tsavo East NP, mid Jan (JSSB).

TROGONIDAE: Trogons

*Apaloderma narina* Narina's Trogon E: recorded at two sites in the Mara GR in Aug (DAT).

ALCEDINIDAE: Kingfishers

*Halcyon albiventris* Brown-hooded Kingfisher E: a pair beside the Tana Bridge on 1 Nov (DAT).

MEROPIDAE: Bee-eaters

*Merops bulcocki* Red-throated Bee-eater E: a single bird at Ntoroko at the south end of Lake Albert (Uganda) on 17 Aug and 2 more 28km further south were all well south of the species' known range (JSA).

B: 200 at nest holes at Chobe, Kabalega Falls NP 13 Aug (JSA).

*Merops hirundineus* Swallow-tailed Bee-eater E: 1 Adwari (Lango, Uganda) on 13 Nov was well south of its known range (JSA).

*Merops nubicus* Carmine Bee-eater E: 1 at Mtito Andei on 11 Nov and 2 there on 26 Nov (DJP, JHF, DAT).

## CORACIIDAE: Rollers

*Eurystomus glaucurus* Broad-billed Roller E: 1 at Lake Baringo 28 Sep to 9 Oct (TS). In Tanzania, 1 at Mufindi on 12 Oct, a first record for the area, may have been a migrant en route to Madagascar (EMB).

## PHOENICULIDAE: Wood Hoopoes

*Phoeniculus minor* Abyssinian Scimitarbill E: a pair Usangu Flats, southern Tanzania mid Feb (JSSB). In Uganda, 1 10 km E of Chepsekunia (Sebei) 21 Nov extends the species' range southwards in eastern Uganda (JSA).

## BUCEROTIDAE: Hornbills

*Bycanistes bucinator* Trumpeter Hornbill E: 2 in the Ruvu Valley, coastal Tanzania 23 Jul (NEB).

*Tockus hemprichii* Hemprich's Hornbill R: 1 Kimwarei, W of the Kerio Valley, 11 Aug (JHF).

*Bucorvus abyssinicus* Abyssinian Ground Hornbill R: a pair near Marigat 30 Apr (DAT) and 20 May (ADL, TS). Resident along the Ndau River (TS), also between Nginyang and Kapedo (JHj) and several sightings N of the Marich Pass (PS).

## CAPITONIDAE: Barbets

*Buccanodon whytii* Whyte's Barbet R: a pair feeding young near Mufindi, southern Tanzania 26 Nov (AJB, EMB).

The race involved was presumably *terminatum*, only once previously recorded in Tanzania.

## INDICATORIDAE: Honeyguides

*Indicator variegatus* Scaly-throated Honeyguide E: 1 Pugu Hills forest near Dar es Salaam 20 Nov (NEB).

*Prodotiscus regulus* Wahlberg's Honeybird E: 2 in Mikumi NP 24 Jul (NEB) were the first records for the park.

## PICIDAE: Woodpeckers, wrynecks

*Jynx ruficollis* Red-throated Wryneck R: apart from several records in the Kenya highlands, the following have been received: 1 Mara GR 18 Aug (DEW) and 1 30 km N of Bushenyi (Ankole, Uganda) 17 May (JSA).

*Picoides obsoletus* Brown-backed Woodpecker R: present in most months Ololua Forest, Nairobi (DKR) but no other Kenya records received. In Uganda, 1 near Bar (Lango) 27 Jun (JSA).

## EURYLAIMIDAE: Broadbills

*Smithornis capensis* African Broadbill R: pair with nest near Kiganjo Jan (DAT) and 1 Sokoke Forest 25 Aug (UEA-ICBP Exped.). Heard in Kakamega Forest Jun, Aug, Sep and Dec with up to 5 in Jun (FRL, GKR, JHF, PEG, DEW). One heard Mrima Hill, Kenya south coast, 25 Sep and 2 there on 6 Nov (MACC, RAM). In Tanzania, resident around Lake Duluti and Arusha NP (JSSB). Recorded in Uganda 3 km E of Kibimba 24 Apr and just S of Kibimba 19 Oct - new localities (JSA).

## PITTIDAE: Pittas

*Pitta angolensis* African Pitta R: 1 Gede Forest 27 Aug (UCE-ICBP Exped.), and 1 near Shimoni on the late date of 19 Dec (TA).

In Tanzania, 5 grounded at night in mist at Mufindi 5 May (EMB).

## ALAUDIDAE: Larks

*Galerida modesta* Sun Lark S(A): records from West Nile District, Uganda, were: as follows: 3 10 km NE of Yumbe 8 Aug, 2 30 km NE of Omugo 8 Aug, 2 7 km S

of Laropi 10 Aug (all JSA).

First Uganda (and East Africa) records for many years.

*Mirafra cantillans* Singing Bush Lark M: 1 caught at night in mist at Ngulia 7 Dec (GCB).

*Mirafra hypermetra* Red-winged Bush Lark E: 2 near Chepsekunia (Sebei) 21 Nov, thus extending its range southwards in eastern Uganda (JSA).

#### HIRUNDINIDAE: Swallows

*Hirundo angolensis* Angola Swallow D: present in the Mufindi area, southern Tanzania, Apr to Dec (AJB, EMB).

*Hirundo atrocaerulea* Blue Swallow D: present in the Mufindi area from 4 Nov to 11 May (AJB, EMB).

*Hirundo semirufa* Rufous-chested Swallow N: widespread in the Mara GR 18-20 Aug (DEW).

*Psalidoprocne pristoptera* Black Rough-wing E: 1 near sea level at Murafa, N of the Sabaki River, 21 Jun (MACC, DJP).

#### ORIOOLIDAE: Orioles

*Oriolus auratus* African Golden Oriole D: an immature at Bissel on the early date of 31 Mar (DJP, ADL).

#### CORVIDAE: Crows, Piapiac

*Ptilostomus afer* Piapiac E: flock of 26 at Kisumu 11 Aug (DAT, WR).

Second Kenya record: the first was some 15 km further west at Maseno in Apr 1971 (see EANHS Bulletin 1971: 99).

#### REMIZIDAE: Penduline Tits

*Remiz musculus* Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit E: a pair at Serere (Teso) on 16 Nov (JSA) extends the range south from NE Uganda.

#### TIMALIIDAE: Babblers

*Turdoides hindei* Hinde's Pied Babbler R: pair plus 2 fledged young at Kiri-nyaga in late Oct (DAT). Party of 5 on Potha Ranch, S of Machakos, 27 Nov (ADL).

*Turdoides jardineii* Arrow-marked Babbler E: small party 15 km N of Mogotio on 16 May (ADL).

*Turdoides plebejus* Brown Babbler E: 40+ Maralal area 7 Aug (DEW) and several groups along the western edge of the Laikipia plateau 8 Aug (DEW).

*Turdoides rubiginosus* Rufous Chatterer E: 3 near Dodoma (Tanzania) 20 Mar (JSSB).

#### CAMPEPHAGIDAE: Cuckoo Shrikes

*Campephaga quiscalina* Purple-throated Cuckoo Shrike E: 1 at Kabyoyon, Mt Elgon (Uganda) 10 Nov (JSA).

*Coracina caesia* Grey Cuckoo Shrike E: 1 at Mrima Hill, south Kenya coast, 6 Nov (MACC, RAM).

*Coracina pectoralis* White-breasted Cuckoo Shrike R: singles at Mikumi NP 26 Jun and near Njombe 7 Nov (EMB). In Uganda, 1 at Lutembe, Kampala, 25 Apr was well outside its known range (JSA).

#### TURDIDAE: Thrushes

*Cercomela familiaris* Red-tailed Chat E: 1 Kito Pass NW of Baringo 23 Feb (TS), 2 on the Ololoolo escarpment, northwestern Mara GR on 29 May and 18 Aug (FRL, GKR, DEW). In Uganda, 1 Rom (NE Acholi) 24 Jun and 3 Labwor (Lango) 13 Nov (JSA).

*Cercomela scotocerca* Brown-tailed Rock Chat E: resident on lava flow in the Shaba GR near Archer's Post (DAT).

*Cercotrichas quadrivirgata* Eastern Bearded Scrub Robin E: 2 near Dodoma (Tanzania) 17 Mar (JSSB).

*Cossypha natalensis* Red-capped Robin Chat E (away from the coast): 1 Kitovu Forest, Taveta 20 Nov (DAT) and 1 at Aruba, Tsavo East NP, 29 Dec (JM). In Tanzania, juveniles netted at Mufindi 14 Feb (EMB).

*Dryocichloides lowei* Iringa Ground Robin R: 7 netted at Mufindi between 20 Mar and 7 May and 2 netted there 27 Dec (AJB, EMB).

*Monticola rufocinerea* Little Rock Thrush R: 2 near Ngobit 8 Nov (DAT) and 1 N of Baringo 18 May (ADL, TS). In Uganda, 1 Kapawata (Sebei) 9 Nov (JSA).

*Oenanthe bottae* Red-breasted Wheatear R: a few Lokichoggio airstrip 6 Jul and 7 Sep (JHj). In Uganda, 2 10 km W of Moroto 19 Jun and common north to Kidepo NP in Jun (JSA).

*Sheppardia gunningi* East Coast Akalat R: a pair on the northern edge of the Shimba Hills NP 10-11 May and singles in Soko Forest 9 and 13 Jul and 3 and 6 Aug (FRL, GKR, UEA-ICBP Exped.).

*Turdus fischeri* Spotted Ground Thrush R: Gede Forest population estimated at 60-80 birds in Jul and Aug with a density of 1.5 - 2 birds/ha, however, only 3 recorded in Soko Forest during the same period (UEA-ICBP Exped.).

*Turdus litsipsirupa* Groundscraper Thrush D, R: several in the Mufindi area of southern Tanzania during Nov (AJB, EMB).

*Turdus pelios* African Thrush E: 1 15 km N of Mogotio 16 May (ADL) and 1 between Marigat and Kabarnet 19 May (ADL, TS).

#### SYLVIIDAE: Warblers

*Apalis binotata* Masked Apalis E: recorded in an area 37 km NW of Kabale, and at Lake Mutanda near Kisoro in SW Uganda, 15-16 Dec (JSA).

*Camaropectes stierlingi* Barred Wren Warbler E: in Tanzania, 2 40 km N of Kondo 1 Mar, a few near Dodoma 17 Mar and 1 Mkata plateau 5 May (JSSB).

*Cisticola bodessa* Boran Cisticola E: 2-3 Kito Pass NW of Baringo 23 Feb (TS), a pair at Maralal 8 Aug and another on the escarpment NE of Lake Baringo 8 Aug (DEW).

*Cisticola nana* Tiny Cisticola E: 1 Kito Pass NW of Baringo 23 Feb (TS).

*Dryocichla incana* Red-winged Grey Warbler R: a pair with 2 dependent young 24 km S of Paraa Lodge, Kabalega Falls NP, Uganda, 4 Aug (JSA).

*Eremomela scotops* Green-capped Eremomela E: a pair feeding young 40 km N of Kondo, Tanzania, 1 Mar (JSSB).

*Heliosais erythroptera* Red-winged Warbler R: in Tanzania, 2 pairs and a single bird in the Ilonga/Kilosa area, 1-10 May and 1 at Maguha (N of Kilosa) 2 May, (JSSB) and 1 Mremba, near Ilonga, 25-28 Dec (PJM).

*Parisoma lugens* Brown Parisoma E: 1 Baringo 6 Aug (DAT).

*Phyllolais pulchella* Buff-bellied Warbler E: 2 Usangu Flats, southern Tanzania 13 Mar (JSSB).

*Prinia leucopogon* White-chinned Prinia E: present in Kabarnet Forest, 19 May (ADL, TS).

## MUSCICAPIDAE: Flycatchers

*Muscicapa gambagae* Gambaga Flycatcher S(B): an adult with a juvenile 5 km E of Garissa, and 2 other adults nearby 20 Nov (DJP).

*Muscicapa lendu* Chapin's Flycatcher S(B): 1 Kakamega Forest 9 Aug (DAT).

*Myioparus plumbeus* Lead-coloured Flycatcher E: a pair Baringo 6 Aug (DAT).

*Erannornis albicauda* White-tailed Blue Flycatcher R: a pair building a nest at Karatu (Ngorongoro, Tanzania) 16 Oct (DAT). In Uganda, common in the area from 37 km NW of Kabale to Kisoro, and in the Impenetrable Forest in May and Dec (JSA).

## MOTACILLIDAE: Wagtails, pipits, longclaws

*Anthus sokokensis* Sokoke Pipit R, N: found commonly in Sokoke Forest with a density of about 1 pair per 2 ha in an area of 35 km<sup>2</sup> of *Azelia* forest. Total Sokoke population thought probably to exceed 2000 pairs (UEA-ICBP Exped.).

*Macronyx sharpei* Sharpe's Longclaw E: a pair in highland grassland above Timau 1 Aug (DAT).

## MALACONOTIDAE: Bush Shrikes

*Laniarius barbarus* Black-headed Gonolek E: 1 Baringo from 8 Aug onwards, and 2 there during mid Oct (TS).

*Laniarius mufumbiri* Papyrus Gonolek E: in Uganda, a northerly record from Acholi at 37 km S of Gulu on 26 Jun (JSA).

*Laniarius ruficeps* Red-naped Bush Shrike R: common (20+ seen) around Ukasi on the Mwingi - Garissa road 19 Nov, with a few at the same locality, but in greener conditions, on 15 Dec (DJP).

## LANIIDAE: Shrikes

*Lanius gubernator* Emin's Shrike R: 3+ Chobe (Kabalega Falls NP, Uganda) and 1 37 km NW of Chobe, 12 Aug (JSA).

## PRIONOPIDAE: Helmet Shrikes

*Pronops poliophlopha* Grey-crested Helmet Shrike R: 1 near Narok 19 Sep (DAT) and a party of 7 in Lake Nakuru NP 23 Jun (PC-P).

## STURNIDAE: Starlings, oxpeckers

*Cinnyricinclus sharpii* Sharpe's Starling R: party of 12 birds Kakamega Forest 12 and 14 Sep (JHF, MK, GA, LB) and 1 Tugen Hills Forest 19 May (ADL, TS). In Tanzania, a party in Arusha NP 7 Jan (JSSB).

*Lamprotornis chalcurus* Bronze-tailed Starling R: several with Lesser Blue-eared Glossy Starlings *L. chloropterus* at the base of the Kongelai escarpment 17 Jul, and also several at Kodich, 18 Jul (PCF, ADL). In Uganda, 1 at Chobe (Kabalega Falls NP) 12 Aug (JSA).

*Speculipastor bicolor* Magpie Starling R: numerous Kenya records south to the Lodwar - Kakuma area, Baringo and Tsavo East NP.

*Spreo shelleyi* Shelley's Starling R: 30+ Meru NP 7 May (TS), small parties from Nguni (Kitui District) east to Garissa, and at Kalalu Ranch (Kilifi District) during Nov (DJP), also in the Bachuma area, Tsavo East NP during Aug and Nov (DAT).

*Buphagus africanus* Yellow-billed Oxpecker E: 1 Baringo 6 Aug (DAT).

## NECTARINIIDAE: Sunbirds

*Anthreptes pallidigaster* Amani Sunbird M: fairly common in Sokoke Forest Jul

and August (UEA-ICBP Exped.), but continued felling of *Brachystegia* woodland may soon seriously threaten this species here.

*Anthreptes platyrus* Pygmy Sunbird S(B): a male 40 km E of Moroto, Uganda on 19 Jun (JSA).

*Nectarinia bifasciata* Little Purple-banded Sunbird E: single males near Muhororo and Ntoroko (Tororo, Uganda) 16-17 Aug (JSA).

*Nectarinia habessinica* Shining Sunbird R: resident in the Kapedo area N of Baringo (TS).

*Nectarinia manoensis* Miombo Double-collared Sunbird R: singles at Mufindi, southern Tanzania daily during late Nov (AJB) and 1 at Lake Ngwasi 26 Nov (AJB, EMB).

*Nectarinia minulla* Tiny Sunbird E: 7 near Matiri (Tororo, Uganda) 18 Apr near, or on the edge of Kibale Forest (JSA).

*Nectarinia rufipennis* Rufous-winged Sunbird S(B): several pairs resident in Mwanihana Forest, southern Tanzania (AJB).

*Nectarinia seimundi* Little Green Sunbird E: 2 at Nabugabo (Masaka, Uganda) 25 Oct, providing an interesting link between the Sango Bay population and recent Kifu records (JSA).

PLOCEIDAE: Weavers etc.

*Anomalospiza imberbis* Parasitic Weaver R: up to 6 pairs around Wilson Airport, Nairobi during Dec (FN). In Uganda, records from Kibimba area (Busoga) in Jul, from Kitgum in Jun and Olim (Teso) in Nov indicate a wider distribution than was known previously (JSA).

*Euplectes afer* Yellow-crowned Bishop N: max. numbers at Baringo were 50+ in May (TS).

B: breeding on the Usangu Flats, southern Tanzania, Dodoma and Kondoa areas during Feb and Mar (JSSB).

*Euplectes diadematus* Fire-fronted Bishop R: plentiful and breeding along parts of the Tiva River, Tsavo East NP in mid Jan (JSSB).

*Ploceus golandi* Clarke's Weaver R: small flocks recorded in Sokoke Forest in Aug (DAT, UEA-ICBP Exped.), and 4 birds recorded there 31 Dec (PAG).

*Ploceus heuglini* Heuglin's Masked Weaver R: in Uganda, 6 near Katwe, Lake Edward 10 May, 1 at Paraa, Kabalega Falls NP 6 Aug, and 5 S of Ntoroko (Tororo) 17 Aug (JSA).

*Ploceus rubiginosus* Chestnut Weaver E: recorded in Uganda from near Katakwi (Teso) 18 Jun, 2 at Akoroi (Teso) 30 June, 7 near Palisa (Bukedi) 2 Jul and 6 near Chepsekunia (Sebei) 21 Nov (JSA).

*Ploceus spekeoides* Fox's Weaver R: 1 seen 10 km E of Chepsekunia (Sebei) 21 Nov (JSA).

*Ploceus superciliosus* Compact Weaver R: small party Kakamega 12 Sep (JHF, MK, GA, JB, LB) and a pair near Port Victoria 28 May (FRL, GKR).

*Ploceus weynsi* Weyn's Weaver R: about 50 near Bombo, Uganda, 11 Oct (JSA).

*Quelea erythrops* Red-headed Quelea B: breeding colonies in Tanzania as follows: 1 Mwaui (Shinyanga) early Apr, 3 Mabana near Magole mid Apr, 2 near Kilosa early May and 2 near Dar es Salaam mid May (JSSB).

*Quelea quelea* Red-billed Quelea E: huge colony in Ambatch trees at Akaroi, near Serere (Teso) 30 Jun, one of four in the area was apparently the first

breeding record for Uganda (JSA).

*Plocepasser superciliosus* Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver E: Uganda records from Rom (NE Aholi) in Jun, Kabalega Falls NP in Aug, near Laropi (West Nile) in Aug, near Butiaba in Oct and at Labwor in Nov (JSA).

*Passer castanopterus* Somali Sparrow R: resident at Kapedo with numbers fluctuating between 50 and 200 (TS, JHj). Also present 27 km S of Lodwar on 13 Jun (PS).

*Passer domesticus* House Sparrow E: now well established and breeding around Mombasa railway station and airport, while a pair at Voi 29 May (GCB) and a pair at Mtito Andei 29 Dec (JM) indicate further inland extensions of range.

*Passer motitensis* Rufous Sparrow E: recorded in E Uganda south to Bugisu and Sebei, also common in S Teso between Serere and Ngora (JSA).

*Vidua hypocherina* Steel-blue Whydah E: males recorded near Olorgesailie 17 Mar, 15 May and 5 Jun, near Kajiado 31 Mar and near Kongelai 18 Jul (PCF, ADL, MEJG, DJP), while in Tanzania, 1 at Usangu Flats in mid Feb (JSSB).

*Vidua obtusa* Broad-tailed Paradise Whydah R: 2 Mikumi NP, Tanzania 26 Jun, and 1 Ruaha River gorge 22 June (AJB, EMB).

*Vidua paradisaea* Paradise Whydah E: 2 Kabyoyon (Sebei, Uganda) on 10 Nov was well to the south of other eastern Uganda records.

#### ESTRILDIDAE: Waxbills

*Cryptospiza salvadorii* Abyssinian Crimson-wing E: several Kabarnet Forest 19 May (ADL, TS).

*Estrilda erythronotus* Black-cheeked Waxbill E: 2 near Mbirizi (Masaka) 30 Apr, 2 8 km W of Lwampanga, near Nakasongole 13 Oct, and 4 at Nampyanga, near Soroti on 12 Nov were well outside the documented Uganda range (JSA).

*Estrilda rhodopyga* Crimson-rumped Waxbill E: flock of 10 at Dar es Salaam 19 Nov (NEB) were the first records for Dar.

*Estrilda troglodytes* Black-rumped Waxbill E: about 20 Lake Opeta (Teso, Uganda) were well south of the known range in eastern Uganda (JSA).

*Lagonosticta rufopicta* Bar-breasted Firefinch E: common in various months in Serere area (Teso, Uganda), also 2 78 km N of Soroti 27 Jun, 2 Kachoma (Teso) 2 Jul, 6 Dokolo (Lango) 12 Nov and 2 near Apala (Lango) 13 Nov all indicate that it is more extensive in range in Uganda than previously documented; it probably extends right across the country (JSA).

*Oryzospiza gabonensis* Black-chinned Quailfinch R: common at Kibimba (Busoga, Uganda) between Apr and Nov (max at least 50) while several seen in Rwenzori NP and nearer Katwe during May, and 3 at Serere (Teso) 15 Nov (JSA).

*Pyrenestes minor* Lesser Seed-cracker S(B): 2 at Mufindi, southern Tanzania, 9 Apr and 1 there on 15 Sep (EMB).

*Amadina fasciata* Cut-throat E: 2 10 km E of Chepsekunia (Sebei, Uganda) (JSA).

*Lonchura griseicapilla* Grey-headed Silverbill E: flock of 16 at Karen, Nairobi 5 Nov (FA). At Dar es Salaam, 1 on 5 Feb (NEB) was the first for the area.

*Lonchura malabarica* Silverbill E: a pair near Dodoma, Tanzania 22 Mar and a party to the south of Lake Manyara 26 Apr (JSSB).

#### FRINGILLIDAE: Buntings, seed-eaters

*Emberiza cabanisi* Cabanis' Bunting E: 2 males along the Ntandi - Fort Portal road (Toro, Uganda) 1 Aug (JSA).

*Serinus atroregularis* Yellow-rumped Seed-eater E: 12+ Kadam (southern Karamoja, Uganda) 21 Oct (JSA).

*Serinus burtoni* Thick-billed Seed-eater E: 1 20 km SE of Mubende, Uganda, 28 Jul (JSA) was well outside the known range in Uganda.

*Serinus mennelli* Black-eared Seed-eater S(B): 1 in *Brachystegia* woodland 100 km SE of Njombe, southern Tanzania 8 Nov.

First record of this species for many years.

*Serinus reichardi* Stripe-breasted Seed-eater R: pair at the edge of Mukogodo Forest near Dol Dol 17 Dec (DAT).

In addition, records were also received of the following REQUESTED (R) species, but all from well known and previously documented localities and, as such, have not been included in the species accounts above:

Southern Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus fasciolatus* - Kenya coast  
 Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus* - Mara GR  
 African Hobby *F. cuvieri* - western Kenya and the Lake Victoria basin  
 African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* - Nairobi NP and Fourteen Falls, near Thika  
 Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis* - Amboseli NP  
 Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii* - Baringo  
 Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* - Kidepo NP  
 Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx montanus* - Mufindi, southern Tanzania  
 Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachycoccyx audeberti* - Soko Forest  
 Barred Owlet *Glaucidium capense* - Soko Forest  
 Red-chested Owlet *G. tephronotum* - Kakamega Forest  
 Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar *Caprimulgus donaldsoni* - Tsavo East and Tsavo West  
 Black Swift *Apus barbatus* - Mt Kenya  
 Scarce Swift *Schoutedenapus myoptilus* - Mt Kenya and Kakamega Forest  
 Horus Swift *Apus horus* - rift valley and northern Tanzania  
 Böhm's Bee-eater *Merops boehmi* - Pugu Hills near Dar es Salaam  
 Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinica* - Lake Turkana and northwestern Kenya  
 Forest Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus castaneiceps* - forests in western Uganda  
 Pale-billed Hornbill *Tockus pallidirostris* - Mikumi NP and Kilosa, Tanzania  
 Rufous Short-toed Lark *Calandrella somalica* - Nairobi NP  
 Spike-heeled Lark *Chersomanes albofasciata* - Arusha area, northern Tanzania  
 Spotted Creeper *Salpornis spilonota* - Kitale - Kapenguria area  
 Grey-olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cerviniventris* - Arusha area, northern Tanzania  
 Brown-backed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas hartlaubi* - Nairobi area  
 Southern Hyliota *Hyliota australis* - Kakamega Forest  
 Little Tawny Pipit *Anthus caffer* - Mara GR  
 Papyrus Canary *Serinus koliensis* - Kisumu area

### PALAEARCTIC SPECIES

*Ixobrychus minutus minutus* Little Bittern (Palearctic race) R: 1 Lake Baringo early Apr (TS).

*Ciconia ciconia* White Stork N: largest numbers reported were 200+ Elmenteita 19 Mar (DKR), 350+ Mara GR 15 Nov (DAT), 400 Kiboko 11 Dec and 400 Naivasha 22 Dec (DJP). Hundreds Magadi 12 Dec and Mara GR 23-26 Dec (DKR).

Large passage movements of this species have been most regularly noted in recent years through western Kenya in late Nov.

D: overwintering birds in Uganda at Kidepo NP 23 Jun (single bird) and at



Kibimba 20 Jul (10 birds) (JSA). In Kenya, where oversummering groups are more regular, 100+ Athi River 12 Jun (PED).

*Ciconia nigra* Black Stork R: recorded Nairobi area to 17 Apr (up to 4 birds), and from 15 Oct (again up to 4). In Tsavo East NP 1-2 Jan and Dec (JSSB, JM), 1 Kito Pass 23 Feb (TS), 1 Meru NP 7 Mar (TS), 1 Mara GR 2 Apr and 4 there 27 Dec (DKR), 1 Karatina swamp during Nov and Dec (DAT). In Tanzania, singles Arusha NP late Jan and 26 Feb (JSSB, DAT) and 1 Seronera River 22 Feb (PCL).

*More records than usual away from the regular haunts in Nairobi NP and Tsavo East NP. This species tends to arrive earlier and depart later than the White Stork.*

*Platalea leucorodia* Eurasian Spoonbill S(B): a first year bird at Kajansi, near Kampala 18 Jan, 13 and 18 Mar (JSA, MJC, ABS). Probably the same individual as that at this site in late 1982.

*Anas acuta* Pintail N: on the Kinangop, counts of 4000 at Strong's Dam and 1400 at Simini's Dam 3 Jan (DJP). At Lake Nakuru 400+ in Jan and 500+ at the Tana Bridge 5-7 Feb (MACC, DJP). At Thika 500+ in late Dec (DJP).

E: flock of 50 Lake Magadi 17 Dec was unusual there (DJP, DKR) and 1 Sabaki River mouth 13 Jan (MACC, DJP). In Uganda, 1 Kibimba 16 Jan and 6 there 20 Feb; singles Kajansi 18 Jan, 24 Jan and 5 Feb (MJC). In southern Tanzania, 1 Mbarali Rice Scheme 15 Dec (EMB).

*Anas crecca* Teal R: singles shot Ol Bolossat 8 and 22 Jan (HPB) and 4 there 30 Jan (DJP, DKR).

*Anas penelope* Wigeon R: 15 Simini's Dam, Kinangop, 3 Jan (DJP), 2 shot Ol Bolossat 8 Jan (HPB) and 3 there 30 Jan (DJP, DKR).

*Anas querquedula* Garganey N: counts of 2500 Tana Bridge 5 Feb and 2000-3000 Ahero Rice Scheme 11 Feb (DJP); 1000+ Thika area late Dec (DJP).

D: 3 Lake Magadi 17 Sep were early as well as unusual at this site (DEGB, DJP, DKR).

E: in Tanzania, 1 Usangu Flats 11 Mar, 1 Dodoma 19 Mar and 1 Lake Ngwasi 9 Dec (JSSB).

*Anas clypeata* Shoveler N: largest counts from Lake Nakuru were 1500+ Nderit 29 Jan and 4000+ north shore late Dec (DJP).

*Aythya fuligula* Tufted Duck R: 2 Nakuru - Ol Joro Orok road 30 Jan (DEGB, DJP, DKR) and 1 Thika Oxidation Ponds 5 Feb (DJP).

*Aquila clanga* Greater Spotted Eagle S(B): a juvenile Nairobi NP 26 Feb (MES), and another adult Olorgesailie 17 Dec (DJP). Satisfactory details received. *There are eight previous accepted records, all from Kenya.*

*Aquila nipalensis* Steppe Eagle N: hundreds present in rainy conditions Mara GR 23-25 Dec were feeding on termites (DKR).

*Aquila pomarina* Lesser Spotted Eagle R: early in the year, 2 Nakuru 28 Jan, 4+ Ol Bolossat 30 Jan, 1 Samburu 8 Feb, 1 Mara GR 2 Apr and 1 Nairobi NP 9 Apr (DJP, DKR, DAT). Recorded in Kenya from 15 Oct to end of the year (max. 5 together) from Nairobi, Meru NP, Ngulia, Mackinnon Road, Olorgesailie and Mara GR (DF, DJP, DKR, DAT). In Uganda, whence there have been previous autumn records, moving south with flocks of Common Buzzards *Buteo buteo* at Entebbe (3 on 9 Oct), and near Lwampanga (3 on 11 Oct and 2 on 13 Oct) (JSA).

*Buteo buteo* Common Buzzard D: late birds Ngomeni 23 Apr (MACC, DJP) and Nairobi NP (DJP). First of the autumn Nairobi 2 Oct (DJP).

N: large southwest migration across southern Uganda second week Oct with flocks seen at Lutebe 8 Oct (2500 counted in 55 min plus many more afterwards), and 10 Oct, near Lwampanga 11 Oct (255 counted) and 13 Oct (127), and Budongo Forest 12 Oct (JSA). In southern Tanzania, overwintering in grasslands and pine plantations at Mufindi to early Apr and from 20 Sep with 100+ Jan to Mar and 40+ Oct to Dec (AJB, EMB).

*Hieraaetus pennatus* Booted Eagle R: singles Kapado 14 Oct and 18 Oct (JHj), Magadi 1 Nov (DAT), Vipingo 26 Nov (DJP, MACC, MW), Mzima Springs 25 Nov (DAT) and Ngulia 2-4 and 9-11 Dec (DJP). A pale bird Dar es Salaam 19 Nov (NEB). In Uganda, a few with *B. buteo* flocks N slope of Mt Elgon 9 Oct, 1 near Nabiswera (Buruli county) 11 Oct, 1 near Lwampanga 11 Oct and 1 Entebbe 17 Oct (JSA, MJC).

*Accipiter brevipes* Levant Sparrowhawk S(A): an adult male Meru NP 8 Nov (DAT, DF), full and satisfactory details received - to be published in *Scopus*. The first record for Kenya and the second for East Africa.

*Pernis apivorus* Honey Buzzard R: singles Kito Pass 19 Oct (TS), Ngulia early Nov and 13 Nov (GCB, JHF, DJP) and Nguni, E of Mwingi, 21 Nov (DJP). In Uganda, 1 Nabugabo, near Masaka, 25 Oct (JSA) and in Tanzania, singles Pugu Hills and Irundi (Mufindi) 26 Nov for which satisfactory details were supplied on request (NEB, AJB, EMB).

*Falco cherrug* Saker Falcon S(B): 1 Bulak, S of Lake Stephanie, 10 Dec (FA). Satisfactory details received.

*Falco peregrinus calidus* Peregrine Falcon R: 1 Lake Jipe 20 Nov (DAT). At Msambweni, S Kenya coast, 1 probably of this race 6 Mar (MACC).

*Falco amurensis* Eastern Red-footed Falcon R: in southern Tanzania, up to 4 Mufindi grasslands Jan to Mar and 4 Irundi 6 Feb (AJB, EMB). Up to 50 with roosting Lesser Kestrels *F. naumanni* Nairobi NP 4-30 Apr (MES, ADL, DJP et al.) and 35 in another roost Kajiado 9-10 Apr (CAT, PBT), 6 Isinya 16 Apr (AEB, DJP) and 30 Amboseli 10 Apr (MEJG). In the autumn there were 80+ Bachuma 21 Nov and 10+ Ngulia 26 Nov (DAT, DF), 1 Mackinnon Road 27 Nov (DJP, MACC), 1 Taita Hills 21 Nov, 200+ 24 Nov and scores 25 Nov (DJT).

*Falco concolor* Sooty Falcon R: singles Nairobi NP 9 Apr and 22 May (DKR). The sole Uganda record was of 1 at Entebbe 14 Apr (JSA). Up to 12 daily Ngulia 6-11 Nov (GCB), 4+ Taita Hills 25 Nov (DJT), 2 Kitui turn-off, Garissa road, 18 Nov (DJP).

This species has been recorded regularly in central and eastern Kenya in recent years from late October to mid November.

*Falco eleonorae* Eleonora's Falcon S(B): 1 pale phase Ferguson's Gulf 21 Oct (TS) and a dark phase Nairobi 6 Oct (DKR). Satisfactory details were received of a pale phase example at Ndembera River (Mufindi, Tanzania) 10 Dec (NEB, MW, AJB, EMB).

*Falco naumanni* Lesser Kestrel N: hundreds present late Feb to Apr in the grasslands of the Nairobi - Kajiado - Sultan Hamud area; seen regularly at a roost Nairobi NP 5 Mar to 30 Apr with 1000-5000 first three weeks Apr (MES et al.); 2500 in another roost Kajiado 9-10 Apr (CAT, PBT); 200+ Amboseli 10 Apr (MEJG).

D: first autumn record Nairobi area 20 Oct (DJP).

D: recorded Mufindi, southern Tanzania, to 4 Mar and from 10 Dec (AJB, EMB).

E: in Uganda, whence there are rather few records, 10 Kibimba (Busoga) 20 Feb, 1 Kibimba 18 Oct and 2 singles near Kumi (Teso) 11 Nov (JSA, MJC, ABS).

*Porzana porzana* Spotted Crane S(B): 1 Kapsabet 12 Apr (LS).

*Haematopus ostralegus* Oystercatcher R: 1 Malindi 24 Apr and 2 Galu, south Kenya coast, 24 Nov to the end of the year (MACC).

*Charadrius alexandrinus* Kentish Plover S(B): 2 Ferguson's Gulf 20-23 Oct (TS).  
This species is probably regular at Lake Turkana.

*Charadrius dubius* Little Ringed Plover R: in Kenya, recorded up to 26 Mar and from 8 Oct, from Ferguson's Gulf, Lake Nakuru, Nairobi, Dandora, Tana Bridge, Garissa, Tsavo East NP, Lamu and Amboseli (max. 9 Lamu 27 Dec) (MES, JSSB, TS, DJP).  
This species is a regular visitor in small numbers to the rift valley lakes, Nairobi and the Athi and Tana rivers.

*Charadrius leschenaultii* Great Sandplover N: max. count Dar es Salaam 1000 31 Jan (NEB).

*Charadrius mongolus* Mongolian Sandplover E: INLAND: 1 Lake Nakuru 28 Jan (DJP).

*Pluvialis squatarola* Grey Plover E: INLAND: in Uganda, 1 Lutembe, near Kampala, 12 Mar and 1 Entebbe 24 Jul and 20 Aug (JSA, MJC, ABS). At Lake Jipe 1 on 20 Nov (DAT).

*Numenius arquata* Curlew E, D: the following presumably refer to coastal passage: 1 Manda Island 5 Aug, 1 flying south Diani 4 Jul and 2 on 7 Aug (MACC), and 1 flying south Galu 28 Jul (MACC). At Sababki River mouth 1 26 Nov (MACC, DJP).

E: INLAND: 3 Ferguson's Gulf 20-24 Oct (TS).

*Numenius phaeopus* Whimbrel E: INLAND: in Uganda, singles at Entebbe 19 Mar, 26 Mar, 17 Apr, 23 Jul and 20 Aug, and 3 there 9 Oct and 1 Kibimba Rice Scheme 18 Oct (all JSA).

There were records from Entebbe in most months during the late 1960s, and this is probably a wintering as well as a regular passage site.

*Tringa erythropus* Spotted Redshank R: recorded in Kenya to 30 Apr and from 21 Nov, with records from Lakes Nakuru and Naivasha, Thika, Dandora, Aruba, Tiva River, Lake Jipe and Ahero Rice Scheme. Max. was 3 apart from 165 at Ahero 11 Feb (DJP). In Uganda, 2 Kibimba Rice Scheme 16 Jan and 8 there 20 Feb (JSA), 4 Kakindu 12 Mar (MJC). In Tanzania, 3 Ngorongoro 24 Feb (PCL). The concentration at Ahero was by far the largest counted in East Africa, though scores were seen at this site in 1977 and 1982, and large numbers are probably now regular there. This species seems particularly partial to irrigation, and with the development of more rice schemes, oxidation ponds and other projects involving shallow flooding, it can be expected in East Africa in greater numbers in the future.

*Tringa totanus* Redshank R: the only records received were of singles Lake Naivasha 20 Jan (PF) and at Mida 21 Jun and 26 Nov (MACC, DJP).

*Xenus cinereus* Terek Sandpiper E: INLAND: in Uganda, 1 Kibimba Rice Scheme 18-19 Oct (JSA). In Kenya, 1 Dandora 8 Oct and 10 Nov (DJP) and 1 Lake Nakuru 12 Nov (DKR).

*Actitis hypoleucos* Common Sandpiper D: first return Diani noted 4 Jul (MACC).

*Calidris alba* Sanderling E: INLAND: singles Entebbe 4 Oct and 6 Oct (JSA), 2 Dandora 28-29 Oct (DJP, DEGB, DKR) and 1 Lake Nakuru 20 Dec (PAG).

*Calidris alpina* Dunlin S(A): a bird with the remains of juvenile plumage at Dandora Oxidation Ponds 28-29 Oct (PBT, JHF, DJP, DEGB, DKR) - full details

received.

This is only the third acceptable record for Kenya and the fourth for East Africa.

*Calidris temminckii* Temminck's Stint E: recorded Lakes Nakuru and Naivasha to 2 May and from 8 Oct, most records of 1-2 birds, but 11 together Njoro River mouth (Nakuru) 22 Dec (DJP). Singles Dandora 15 Oct and 10 Nov (DJP) and on the coast, 1 Sabaki River mouth 13 Jan (DJP, MACC). In Uganda, 2 Lutembe 19 Feb, 2 Kajansi (near Kampala) 19 Feb, 4 there 13 Mar and 2 16 Apr (JSA).

*Limicola falcinellus* Broad-billed Sandpiper R: at Sabaki River mouth, 1 only 13 Jan but 9 30 Oct (TS) and 60+ 26 Nov (MACC, DJP). INLAND: 1 Lake Magadi 30 Oct (DJP, DEGB, JD).

After several years in which wintering numbers at the Sabaki appeared to be decreasing, the count of November was the highest ever.

*Philomachus pugnax* Ruff N: 2000 Sergoit dam, Eldoret, 7 Feb of which about one third were males (DJP), 4000-5000 Ahero Rice Scheme 11 Feb (DJP).

Large concentrations appear to be regular at several sites in Kenya west of the rift.

*Limosa lapponica* Bar-tailed Godwit R: the only records received were of 3 Mida 16 Aug and 3+ there 26 Nov (MACC, DJP), 1 Galu 20 Aug (DJP), 2 Malindi 2 Nov (TS) and 1 Watamu 31 Dec (PAG).

*Limosa limosa* Black-tailed Godwit R: very few records this year: 15 Ferguson's Gulf 20-24 Oct (TS); 40 Ahero Rice Scheme 11 Feb (DJP). In Tanzania, 1 Serengeti 24 Feb (DAT) and in Uganda, 6 Kibimba Rice Scheme 18 Oct and 21 there 18 Nov (MJC).

*Phalaropus lobatus* Red-necked Phalarope R: recorded off Shimonzi from 27 Nov, with scores throughout Dec (MH, PH). INLAND: 1 Lake Nakuru 10 Nov (DAT).

*Arenaria interpres* Turnstone E: INLAND: 1-3 Dandora Oxidation Ponds 13 Sep to 8 Oct (DJP), 1 Lake Nakuru 8 Oct (DJP). In Uganda, 2 Entebbe 6 Oct and 1 on 14 Oct, 1 Butiaba 12 Oct (all JSA).

*Stercorarius parasiticus* Arctic Skua S(A): a dark phase adult Ferguson's Gulf 20 Oct (TS); full details received.

Only the fourth record for Kenya and East Africa.

*Stercorarius pomarinus* Pomarine Skua S(B): a pale phase adult Ferguson's Gulf 21-24 Oct (TS); full details received.

There are only five or six previous East African records, all from Kenya.

*Stercorarius* sp. a dark phase bird off Ras Ngomeni 23 Apr was thought to have been *S. parasiticus* (MACC, DJP).

*Larus argentatus* Herring Gull R: max. count Malindi area 40 on 13 Jan. On the Kenya south coast, 1 Galu 24 Oct (MACC) and 1 flying south Tiwi 5 Nov (DJP). At Ferguson's Gulf, 25 from 20-24 Oct (TS) was the largest number recorded to date from Lake Turkana.

*Larus genei* Slender-billed Gull S(B): up to at least 3 adults and 3 immatures with exceptionally large flocks of Grey-headed Gulls *L. cirrocephalus* Lake Nakuru during Nov and Dec (ADF-W, DF, DJP, DKR, TS, DAT).

*Larus ichthyaetus* Great Black-headed Gull S(B): a sub-adult Malindi 5-13 Jan (ALA, MACC, DJP) and an immature and a sub-adult there 31 Dec (PAG).

*Larus ridibundus* Black-headed Gull N: up to 150 Lake Nakuru Dec (DJP, TS). This species continues to occur regularly in small numbers, mainly at Lakes Nakuru and Turkana, and on the coast.

*Gelochelidon nilotica* Nilotica Gull-billed Tern N: 600+ counted roosting Lake Nakuru Nov and Dec (DJP).

N, D: 300+ still present Nakuru 1 May (DJP) were mostly in non-breeding plumage.

*Sterna caspia* Caspian Tern E: 1 Lutembe, Uganda, 12 Mar (JSA, MJC, ABS).

*Sterna hirundo* Common Tern E: an adult Lutembe 25 Apr and a first year bird Entebbe 13 Jun (JSA).

The first records from Uganda.

D, N: at Galu, south Kenya coast, 20-150 regularly roosting on beach May to Jul (non-breeding plumage) and larger packs, Aug to Nov, with 2000 24 Oct and 2 Nov and 4000 24 Nov; few remaining into Dec. Elsewhere on coast, 100 Ngomeni 18 Jun, but largest numbers Aug to Nov with up to 1500 Tiwi late Aug and 2000 there 5-7 Nov, 1000 off Shimoni 27 Aug and 2000 off Malindi 11 Sep. This species seems to occur mainly on southward passage, with smaller numbers of northward passage and overwintering birds, and usually Jan - Feb.

Contrary to the view expressed by Britton 1977 (Scopus 1: 29-34) we find that, during Aug - Nov at least, this is usually the commonest tern on the Kenya coast.

*Sterna sandvicensis* Sandwich Tern S(B): 1 Malindi 23 Nov (DAT, DF).

*Otus scops* Scops Owl R: a pale greyish Scops Owl seen with other migrants near Bissel 31 Mar was assumed to have been a Palaearctic bird (DJP, ADL). At Ngulia, 4 seen on the road at night 6 Dec were thought to have been Palaearctic, and a Palaearctic bird was caught there 9 Dec (GCB, AMF-W, DJP).

*Streptopelia turtur* Turtle Dove S(A): 1-5 first year birds together Entebbe 9 Oct to 6 Nov with at least 7 different birds involved (JSA); also in Uganda, a first year bird Kibimba (Busoga) 8 Nov (JSA). In Kenya, a first year bird Amboseli NP 20 Oct (DJP).

There are only two previous East African records, both from northern Kenya.

*Cuculus canorus* Eurasian Cuckoo D: Jan records from Tsavo East NP (JSSB). In Tanzania, Arusha Jan (JSSB), and Feb records from 80 km S of Dodoma, Usungu, and Naabi Hill (Serengeti) 21 Feb (PCL).

D, N: moderate passage Kenya coastal forests 10-25 Apr (MACC, DJP).

*Cuculus poliocephalus* Lesser Cuckoo R: up to 5+ Diani 10-21 Apr (MACC, DJP), an hepatic female Mzima Springs 14 May (DAT) and 1 Sokoke Forest 23 Nov (DAT) were all presumed to have been Palaearctic (nominate) birds.

*Caprimulgus europaeus* Eurasian Nightjar R: very few records: in the Mufindi area of southern Tanzania, 1 Kilima 13 and 14 Mar (AJB). In Lavington, Nairobi, 1 in Mar (PCF), 2 dead on road between Athi River and Kajiado 23 Nov (DJP, ADL), 1 Diani 18 Nov (MACC), 1 caught Ngulia 5 Dec and 2 caught on 7 Dec (DJP).

*Apus apus* Eurasian Swift R: scores Mara GR 20 Feb (DJP) and Ngorongoro (Tanzania) 25 Feb (PCL). Passage noted southern Uganda between 15 Aug and 16 Oct with small flocks Bujenje (Bunyoro), Ntoroko (S end of Lake Albert), Entebbe and Bombo (JSA). In Tanzania, flocks seen Mufindi 28 Sep and 4 Oct and a few over the Ulugurus 1-2 Oct (AJB). Many hundreds accompanying a storm Taita Hills 24 Nov (DJT) and a few near Galana Ranch 27 Nov (DJP). A similarly timed passage in southern Uganda, peaking in September, was recorded during autumn in the late 1960s (DJP). The status and movements of the Eurasian Swift within East Africa are still very much of a mystery. We would welcome any future records of swifts definitely identified as this species.

*Coracias garrulus* Eurasian Roller N, M: thousands arrived with a heavy storm Taita Hills 24 Nov, and continual large movement next day, including a striking albino bird (DJT).

E: in Uganda, whence records are sparse away from the western rift, 1 Entebbe 9 Apr, up to 8 there 26 Oct to 5 Nov, 6 on 10 Dec and 2 26 Dec; also 1 Kibimba 19 Oct, 2 Lutembe 6 Nov and 1 Kajansi 11 Nov (all JSA).

E: in Tanzania, Feb records from Serengeti 23rd and Ngorongoro 25th (PCL).

*Upupa epops epops* Hoopoe R: up to 4 Baringo Jan to Mar and Oct to end of the year (TS), 1 Tsavo East NP mid Jan (JSSB), 1 Mt Kulal 11 Oct and 1 Ngulia 4-6 Nov and 13 Nov (GCB, AMF-W, LF).

*Delichon urbica* House Martin D: a late party of 19 Kayonza (Kigezi, Uganda) 8 May (JSA).

*Cercotrichas galactotes* Rufous Bush Chat E: 6+ Baringo Jan and Feb, 20+ there early to mid May and small numbers again Dec (TS). This now seems to be a regular wintering site.

N: particularly abundant on passage Garissa area 19-21 Nov when several hundreds encountered (DJP).

*Irania gutturalis* Irania R: Tanzania records from Chipongola 9 Feb, Dodoma 6 and 18 Mar and Arusha 9 Apr (JSSB); also 1 Olduvai 25 Feb (PCL). On northward passage Kenya, 4+ near Tawa (Machakos) with many Sprossers *Luscinia luscinia* 24 Mar (DJP), 3 Kajiado 31 Mar (ADL, DJP), 1 east of Meru 2 Apr, 1 Nyambenis and another, 40 km E of Embu, 4 Apr (DJP). Other records were all of birds on southward passage inland SE Kenya, Nov and Dec.

*Luscinia luscinia* Sprosser N, D: usual southward passage E and central Kenya, with scores Chyulu Hills 13 Nov (JHF, DJP) and hundreds Mwingi - Nguni (Kitui) 21 Nov (DJP). Otherwise 2 singing Bissel 19 Mar (perhaps wintering), scores in misty conditions Tawa (Machakos) and nearby 24 Mar, and common in *Lantana* scrub in the Nyambenis and along the lower Meru - Embu road 4 Apr (DJP) and 1 Kariobangi 13 Apr (DJP).

*Monticola saxatilis* Rock Thrush E: in Uganda, 1 Entebbe 8 Dec (JSA).

*Oenanthe pleschanka* Pied Wheatear E: 1 16 km E of Layantende (Masaka, Uganda) 2 Dec (JSA).

*Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Redstart R: in Kenya, 2-3 Lolgorien 17 Mar (TS).

*Saxicola rubetra* Whinchat E: central Kenya records from Lanet, Baringo, Keekorok and Kajiado Jan to Mar, and from Nairobi - Athi Plains area 20 Oct to 27 Nov (DJP, TS, PCF). In southern Tanzania, 1 Mufindi 7 Feb (AJB, EMB). The Whinchat is regular and common in most areas of west Kenya and Uganda.

*Acrocephalus arundinaceus* Great Reed Warbler R: common and singing along the Tana below Garsen 12 Jan (DJP, MACC, JDH). One singing inside Serena Lodge, Amboseli NP, 19-21 Mar (DJP). Up to 4 together Nairobi area 13-25 Apr (DJP).

*Acrocephalus griseldis* Basra Reed Warbler R: 1 28 km E of Serere (Teso, Uganda) 20 Nov (JSA). Present most days Ngulia 4-10 Dec and 24 ringed (DJP, GCB). Numerous (scores) Idsowe area, lower Tana, 12 Jan (DJP, MACC, JDH). There are only two previous records from Uganda, both of birds caught at Kampala in the late 1960s (see EANHBS Bulletin 1972: 27-29).

*Acrocephalus palustris* Marsh Warbler D, E: as usual central and inland E Kenya Nov to Dec, with first record Nairobi area 4 Nov, and scores Nguni - Mwingi (Kitui) 21 Nov (DJP). Otherwise, 1 Baringo 30 Nov (TS, DJT), the first for this locality. At Bissel, 1 singing same site 13 and 31 Mar was presumably wintering (DJP, ADL). One 20 km E of Machakos 18 Apr (DJP).

*Hippolais icterina* Icterine Warbler R: 1 singing strongly in Acacia grove 40 km NE of Keekorok 21 Feb (DJP). In Tanzania, 1 Shinyanga 16 Apr (JSSB).

*Hippolais olivetorum* Olive-tree Warbler R: 1 10 km SW of Meru NP 4 Apr (DJP). In autumn, 3 caught and ringed Ngulia 5-7 Dec (DJP).

*Locustella fluviatilis* River Warbler R: 3-4 near Bissel 31 Mar (ADL, DJP), 1 found dead Nairobi 19 Apr (DAT) and 1 in song Kariobangi 25 Apr (DJP). Recorded Ngulia from 25 Nov with 132 caught and ringed 4-11 Dec (DAT, DJP, GCB); 5+ at two sites Nguni (Kitui) 15 Dec (DJP).

*Phylloscopus collybita* Chiffchaff R: 1-2 Nakuru - Ol Joro Orok 30 Jan (DJP, DEGB, DKR). Total of about 10 at 3000-3500 m E slopes of Mt Elgon 8 Feb (DJP). In Uganda, 1 Entebbe 2 Apr (JSA).

*Phylloscopus sibilatrix* Wood Warbler S(B): Uganda records from 14 km S of Mbarara 13 Feb (snatches of song), Entebbe 27 Mar and 5 Apr, Serere (Teso) 16 Nov and Magoro (Teso) 19 Nov (all JSA). In Kenya 2 Mara GR 24 Mar (MEJG).

*Sylvia communis* Whitethroat R for these areas: 2 50 km NE of Keekorok 19 Feb (DJP) and 1 Kisumu 26 Dec (PAG).

*Sylvia nisoria* Barred Warbler R: away from well known wintering areas in SE Kenya: common mid Mar Kajiado and Amboseli (DJP), 1 Kedong 9 Apr (AEB, DJP), up to 5 Baringo throughout Mar, then unusual numbers (scores) there Nov, with many remaining to the end of the year (TS). Also 20+ Nginyang 20 Dec and 1 Kapedo 26-31 Dec (DJP, JHj). In Uganda, 1 Lutembe 6 Nov (JSA).

*Ficedula albicollis* Collared Flycatcher R: a first year male of the race *semi-torquata* and at least 1 female Kakamega Forest station 9-11 Feb (DJP). In Uganda, 2 Lutembe 8 Oct (JSA).

*Muscicapa striata* Spotted Flycatcher D: passage at Entebbe 8 Mar to 14 Apr and then from 17 Sep, peak in mid Oct (JSA).

*Anthus cervinus* Red-throated Pipit N: scores Solai 29 Jan (DJP).

E: in Uganda, up to 40 Kibimba Rice Scheme Jan to Feb and again in autumn up to 30 Nov; also records from Entebbe 6 Mar, 1 Apr and from 9 Dec, and Kajansi 12 Nov (JSA, MJC).

E: in northern Tanzania, 1 Ngare Nanyuki (Arusha) 23 Jan (JSSB).

*Motacilla alba* White Wagtail E: 1 Mida 23 Nov (DAT) and 1 Garissa 20 Nov (DJP).

*Motacilla cinerea* Grey Wagtail E: lower altitude records from Shaba GR 29 Sep (DAT), Nairobi (Chiromo) 2 Oct, 12 Oct and 23-26 Dec (DJP), and Tiwi, south Kenya coast, 7 Nov (AEB, DJP).

*Lanius collurio* Red-backed Shrike N, D: autumn migration at Entebbe from 10 Oct with max. count of 29 on 30 Oct (JSA).

*Lanius collurio* x *L. isabellinus* Red-backed/Red-tailed Shrike hybrid R: 1 Galana River, Kalalu Ranch 27 Nov (DJP, MACC, MW).

*Lanius minor* Lesser Grey Shrike D: birds on southward passage Uganda at Entebbe from 9 Oct to 3 Nov (1-3 on 6 days) and 1 on 24 Nov (JSA).

*Lanius nubicus* Nubian Shrike S(A): a first year bird remained at Baringo to 28 Feb (TS et al., see *Scopus* 7: 97-98) and an adult appeared there on 8 Dec and remained to the end of the year (TS et al.).

These are only the second and third records for Kenya and East Africa.

*Lanius senator* Woodchat Shrike R: different individuals Entebbe 1-22 Mar and 10-29 Mar (JSA). Baringo, 1 4-11 Nov, 5 there 23 Nov to mid Dec and 3 to

the end of the year (TS, MR et al.). At Lake Bogoria 2 from 22-29 Dec (TS,MR). There are very few previous records for Kenya and southern Uganda.

## BACK RECORDS

### AFROTROPICAL and OCEANIC SPECIES

#### SULIDAE: Boobies

*Sula dactylatra* Masked Booby R: 500-800 pairs nesting on Latham Island off Dar es Salaam 16 Sep 1982, with young of all ages (NEB).

#### FREGATIDAE: Frigatebirds

*Fregata ariel* Lesser Frigatebird S(A): an adult male off Watamu Jan 1980 (LG) and another adult male off Dar es Salaam 1 May 1982 (NEB) - full and satisfactory details received for both examples.

First record for Kenya and the second for Tanzania.

#### ACCIPITRIDAE: Birds of Prey

*Chelictinia riocourii* Swallow-tailed Kite R: several records from the Kapedo area to the north of Baringo during Oct and Dec 1979, Jan 1980, Oct and Dec 1981 and Aug 1982 (JHj).

#### OTIDIDAE: Bustards

*Neotis denhami* Denham's Bustard E: 2 Maralal 10 Mar 1982 (BSM).

#### STRIGIDAE: Owls

*Otis leucotis* White-faced Scops Owl R: 2 young found out of the nest at Kisii 19 Sep 1982 (Br MM).

#### CAPRIMULGIDAE: Nightjars

*Caprimulgus inornatus* Plain Nightjar R: 1 dead on road 40 km N of the Marich Pass 17 Sep 1978 (PS).

*Caprimulgus nubicus* Nubian Nightjar R: 1 dead on road 5 km N of the Marich Pass 17 Feb 1981 (PS).

*Caprimulgus stellatus* Star-spotted Nightjar R: records from Lokori, N Kenya during Jul 1968 and Jun 1970, from Colcheccio Oct 1980, and from Kapedo during Sep 1981 and Jan 1982 (ADL, TS, JHj - see *Scopus* 8: 27-28).

*Caprimulgus tristigma* Freckled Nightjar R: records from Kapedo during Jun and Jul 1981 and May 1982 (JHj).

*Macrodipteryx longipennis* Standard-winged Nightjar R: 1 between Nginyang and Kapedo during Aug 1981 (JHj).

*Macrodipteryx vexillarius* Pennant-winged Nightjar R: 1 at Mukutani, E of Baringo during Aug 1981 (JHj).

#### COLIIDAE: Mousebirds

*Colius leucocephalus* White-headed Mousebird R: records from Garissa area in Dec 1974, Jan, Nov and Dec 1975 and Dec 1976 (see *Scopus* : 27-28).

#### MEROPIDAE: Bee-eaters

*Merops nubicus* Carmine Bee-eater E: 2 Kapedo 30 Nov 1979 (JHj).

#### TURDIDAE: Thrushes

*Cossypha natalensis* Red-capped Robin Chat E: juveniles netted at Mufindi, southern Tanzania, 11 and 14 Nov 1982 were the first records for the area (EMB, AJB).



## SYLVIIDAE: Warblers

*Camacroptera stierlingi* Barred Wren Warbler E: 1 Manyoni, Tanzania, 14 Apr 1982 (JSSB).

*Phyllolais pulchella* Buff-bellied Warbler E: 1 Usangu Flats, southern Tanzania during Apr 1981 (JSSB).

## NECTARINIIDAE: Sunbirds

*Anthreptes platurus* Pygmy Sunbird S(B): a male and 2 females near Kapedo 16 Nov 1979 (JHj).

## PLOCEIDAE: Weavers etc.

*Vidua obtusa* Broad-tailed Paradise Whydah R: present at Ilonga, near Kilosa, Tanzania early May 1982 (BJM).

## ESTRIDIDAE: Waxbills

*Pyrenestes minor* Lesser Seed-cracker S(B): an immature netted at Mufindi, southern Tanzania 14 Oct 1982 (AJB, EMB).

*Pytilia afra* Orange-winged Pytilia R: present at Ilonga, near Kilosa, Tanzania 29 Apr to 15 May 1982 (PJM).

## PALAEARCTIC SPECIES

List A: supplied by D. Schmidl - mostly from Serengeti NP Tanzania and Nakuru NP Kenya. Included are a number of previously unpublished records which pre-date our reports (which began in *Scopus* 1: 116-131), but which seem to be of sufficient interest to merit publication. Unless indicated otherwise, D. Schmidl was the observer.

*Ciconia nigra* Black Stork R: 1 Serengeti 9 Nov 1970 (KC-L) and 1 Mar 1977. Single birds Nakuru 14 Feb 1976, 16 Oct 1976, 2 Dec 1976, 13 Mar 1977 and 19 Mar 1977.

*Anas crecca* Teal R: 1 Nakuru 20 Jan 1975.

*Anas penelope* Wigeon R: 1 Nakuru 7 Jan 1973 and another 2 Dec 1976. At Lake Jipe 10 on 20 Jan 1976 (+PCL).

*Aythya fuligula* Tufted Duck R: 1 Nakuru 16 Dec 1976.

*Buteo rufinus* Long-legged Buzzard R: 1 wintering Nakuru 24 Oct 1976 to 16 Feb 1977. Details supplied.

*Pernis apivorus* Honey Buzzard R: 2 flying north Nakuru 1 May 1977.

*Falco peregrinus calidus* Peregrine Falcon R: seen Serengeti 27 Nov 1974 and 18 Feb 1975. A male and another pair wintering Nakuru between 28 Oct 1976 and Mar 1977.

*Charadrius leschenaultii* Great Sandplover E: INLAND: 1 Nakuru 28 Nov 1976.

*Charadrius mongolus* Mongolian Sandplover E: INLAND: 1 Lake Masek, Serengeti, 18 Sep 1968 (DAT). At Nakuru, 1 7 Aug 1977.

*Pluvialis squatarola* Grey Plover E: INLAND: singles Nakuru 20 Oct to 8 Nov 1976, 28 Nov 1976, 2 Dec 1976 and 28 Aug 1977.

*Calidris alba* Sanderling E: INLAND: 1 Lake Lagarja, Serengeti 2 Mar 1966 (KC-L). At Nakuru, 1 4-8 Nov 1976 and 2 28 Nov 1976.

*Arenaria interpres* Turnstone E: INLAND: 2 Lake Lagarja, Serengeti 14 Sep 1961 (KC-L). Singles Nakuru 12 Sep 1976, 1 Nov 1976 and 18 Aug 1977.

*Limosa limosa* Black-tailed Godwit R: 1 Nakuru 28 Jun 1977 and 2 there 4-5 Sep 1977.

*Numenius arquata* Curlew R: in Serengeti, 1 near Ndutu 18 Feb 1975 and 1 Lake Kasliya 2 Apr 1972 (LM). Singles Nakuru 27 Aug 1976 and 21 Apr 1977.

*Numenius phaeopus* Whimbrel R INLAND: singles Nakuru 22 Sep 1976, 4 Nov 1976 and 7 Aug 1977.

*Tringa erythropus* Spotted Redshank R: several 1975-77 records of single birds Nakuru and Lake Naivasha dated 20 Jan to 1 Apr. In Serengeti, 4 on 18 Feb 1963 (KC-L), singles 8 Sep 1970, 7 Dec 1971 (DAT), 6 Jan 1973 and 16 Jan 1973 (KC-L), 28-31 Jan 1974 (DAT), 1 Jan 1975, 12 Jan 1975, 16 Jan 1975 and 29 Nov 1978.

*Tringa totanus* Redshank R: singles Serengeti 7 Jan 1972 and 11 Jan 1975 (KC-L).

*Xenus cinereus* Terek Sandpiper R INLAND: 1 Nakuru 16 Oct 1976, 2 28 Oct 1976, 5 4 Nov 1976, 3 11 Nov 1976 and 2 15 Nov 1976.

*Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Redstart R: 1 Nakuru 4 Mar 1975.

*Saxicola rubetra* Whinchat R KENYA: occurred regularly Nakuru from 1975 to 1977 with records from Nov to 6 Apr.

List B: other back records.

*Ciconia nigra* Black Stork R: singles Saguta River, Kapedo 16-17 Nov 1979 and 8 Dec 1979; singles there 9 Oct 1981, 18 Nov 1981 and 3 26 Dec 1981; then singles 31 Jan and 7 Mar 1982 (all JHj).

*Anas crecca* Teal R: 11 shot Ol Bolossat Nov and Dec 1981 and 8 in Jan 1982. No less than 85 shot Lake Solai Nov 1981 to Jan 1982 (HPB).

*Anas penelope* Wigeon R: 17 shot Ol Bolossat Nov and Dec 1980, 6 in Jan and Feb 1981, 1 28 Nov 1981 and 15 in Jan and Feb 1982; 2 shot Lake Solai 26 Dec 1981 and 1 23 Jan 1982 (all HPB).

*Aquila heliaca* Imperial Eagle S(B): an immature Aitong 22 Nov 1982 (DEW) and another Mt Suswa 25 Nov 1982 (DEW). Full details of both supplied.

*Charadrius dubius* Little Ringed Plover R: 1 40 km N of Kapedo (Saguta River) 17 Nov 1979, 5 Kapedo 26 Dec 1981 and 1 there 7 Mar 1982 (all KHj).

*Gallinago stenura* Pintail Snipe S(A): 2 Bamburu, Mombasa, 22-31 Oct 1981, at least 1 remaining in the area to 31 Dec (PBT et al.). At Lake Naivasha, 1 24 Jan 1982 (DJP, see *Scopus* 8: 45-46).

*Calidris temminckii* Temminck's Stint R: 2 Kapedo 17 Nov 1979 and 2 26 Dec 1981 (JHj).

*Limosa lapponica* Bar-tailed Godwit R: 2-3 Tiwi Beach 17 Mar 1982.

*Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Redstart R: 1 Lokichoggio 6 Mar 1980 (JHj).

*Saxicola rubetra* Whinchat R KENYA: 1 Kapedo 11 Mar 1982 (JHj).

*Sylvia nisoria* Barred Warbler R: 1-2 Kapedo 27 Dec 1981 and 28 Feb to 18 Mar 1982 (JHj).

## 'REQUESTED' AND 'SPECIAL ATTENTION' SPECIES

Guidance on what records to submit for the East African Bird Reports is given in the *Scopus* Supplement of June 1982, copies of which still may be obtained free of charge from D.A. Turner, Box 48019 Nairobi. The response from observers to the present report is most encouraging and shows that the Supplement is doing its job, so that the annual reports, coupled with *Birds of East Africa* and the forthcoming *Bird atlas for Kenya*, will serve as a full record of the status of the East African avifauna during the 1980s and, hopefully, beyond.

For 1984 and 1985 we intend to make a special effort to obtain the fullest information on a number of species, mostly already in the Requested (R) category, and we urge observers to record and send in all such records during the next two years. A list of these birds follows but does not, of course, supplant the full list of 'R' species.

*Dendrocygna bicolor* Fulvous Whistling Duck  
*Dendrocygna viduata* White-faced Whistling Duck  
*Circus macrourus* Pallid Harrier  
*Circus pygargus* Montagu's Harrier  
*Butastur rufipennis* Grasshopper Buzzard  
*Chelictinia riocourii* Swallow-tailed Kite  
*Neotis denhami* Denham's Bustard  
*Charadrius asiaticus* Caspian Plover  
*Clamator glandarius* Great Spotted Cuckoo  
*Clamator jacobinus* Black and White Cuckoo  
*Clamator leuallantii* Leuallant's Cuckoo  
*Cuculus canorus* Eurasian Cuckoo  
*Cuculus clamosus* Black Cuckoo  
*Cuculus gularis* African Cuckoo  
*Caprimulgus* spp. } nightjars, records of all species as well  
*Macrodipteryx* spp. } as special attention to road-kills  
*Coracias caudata lorti* lilac-throated race of the Lilac-breasted Roller  
*Pitta angolensis* African Pitta  
*Mirafra cantillans* Singing Bush Lark  
*Oenanthe pileata* Capped Wheatear  
*Saxicola rubetra* Whinchat - from all areas of East Africa  
*Tmetothylacus tenellus* Golden Pipit

Records of these species should be sent in in the normal way to the recorders early in 1985 and early in 1986.

## RARE BIRDS

Records of birds new for any of the three East African countries Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and 'S(A)' species (those recorded in East Africa five or fewer times) should be sent in to one or other of the recorders, with full details, including photographs if available, and the name(s) of any other observer(s) present at the time, as soon after the observation was made for circulation amongst the members of the East African Rarities Committee.

It would be much appreciated if details could be sent in duplicate. Photocopies of original field notebook descriptions and sketches will be most useful for straight sight records.

## 'FIRST' AND 'LAST' DATES FOR SOME PALAEARCTIC MIGRANT LANDBIRDS

Species	central/eastern Kenya except where marked*		Uganda
	Last	First	First
<i>Merops persicus</i>	22 Apr Amboseli	5 Nov Tiwi	10 Sep
<i>M. apiaster</i>	10 Apr Kedong	28 Apr Nairobi	10 Sep
<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	25 Oct Tsavo	15 Oct Dandora	26 Oct
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	23 Apr Ngomeni	18 Oct Marula	-
<i>Delichon urbica</i>	2 Apr Timau	1 Oct Naivasha	-
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	-	22 Sep Dandora	23 Sep
<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	2 May Naivasha	10 Oct Diani	13 Oct
<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	-	5 Nov Ngulia	-
<i>Irania gutturalis</i>	4 Apr Embu	-	-
<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	13 Apr Kariobangi	28 Oct Kariobangi	-
<i>L. megarhynchos</i>	31 Mar Bissel	-	-
<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	23 Apr Ngomeni	2 Nov Magadi	-
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	21 Apr Emali	16 Sep Ngongs	8 Oct
<i>O. isabellina</i>	25 Apr Mara*	26 Sep Mara*	18 Oct
<i>O. pleschanka</i>	-	23 Oct Kajiado	-
<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	25 Apr Kariobangi	-	-
<i>A. griseldis</i>	-	(4 Dec) Ngulia	-
<i>A. palustris</i>	18 Apr Machakos	4 Nov Kariobangi	-
<i>A. schoenobaenus</i>	11 May Kariobangi	-	26 Nov
<i>A. scirpaceus</i>	4 May Kariobangi	4 Nov Kariobangi	25 Nov
<i>Hippolais languida</i>	3 Apr Meru NP	19 Nov Garissa	-
<i>H. pallida</i>	18 Apr Machakos	22 Oct Amboseli	-
<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	25 Apr Kariobangi	25 Nov Ngulia	-
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	8 May Naivasha	14 Sep Nairobi	10 Sep
<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	24 Mar Nairobi	15 Oct Nairobi	-
<i>S. borin</i>	25 Apr Kariobangi	24 Oct Kariobangi	3 Oct
<i>S. communis</i>	27 Apr Kariobangi	29 Oct Kariobangi	-
<i>S. nisoria</i>	14 Apr Lukenya	9 Nov Baringo	-
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	18 Apr Machakos	9 Oct Nairobi	17 Sep
<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	17 Apr Kariobangi	24 Oct Kariobangi	-
<i>A. trivialis</i>	16 Apr Kajiado	6 Oct Langata	6 Oct
<i>Motacilla flava</i>	2 May Nakuru	31 Aug Kariobangi	24 Sep
<i>Lanius collurio</i>	23 Apr Tsavo and Ngomeni	8 Nov Nairobi	10 Oct
<i>L. isabellinus</i>	16 Apr Kajiado	11 Nov Ngulia	11 Nov
<i>L. minor</i>	1 May Bogoria	-	9 Oct

All Uganda records supplied by J.S. Ash. The earlier arrival of *Phylloscopus trochilus*, *Sylvia borin*, *Muscicapa striata* and *Lanius collurio* in Uganda than in central Kenya accords with previous experience there (see, e.g. Pearson 1972). The wintering and migration of Palaearctic passerines at Kampala, southern Uganda, *Ibis* 114: 43-60).

English names of birds listed above but not mentioned in the Species Report: *Merops persicus* Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, *M. apiaster* Eurasian Bee-eater, *Riparia riparia* Sand Martin, *Oriolus oriolus* Golden Oriole, *Luscinia megarhynchos* Nightingale, *Oenanthe oenanthe* Northern Wheatear, *O. isabellina* Isabelline Wheatear, *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Sedge Warbler, *A. scirpaceus* Reed Warbler, *Hippolais languida* Upcher's Warbler, *H. pallida* Olivaceous Warbler, *Phylloscopus trochilus* Willow Warbler, *Sylvia atricapilla* Blackcap, *S. borin* Garden

Warbler, *Anthus trivialis* Tree Pipit, and *Motacilla flava* Yellow Wagtail.

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## RINGING AND MIGRATION AT NGULIA, TSAVO, AUTUMN 1983

G.C. Backhurst and D.J. Pearson

The Lodge was manned for a total of only 14 nights between 3 November and 11 December, but netting at night was possible on only seven, while daytime netting was attempted on two more days. This was the lowest level of activity at Ngulia since night-netting started in November 1974. Moreover, the total of 2769 Palaearctic migrants ringed was the lowest since the 1973/74 season. On the positive side, the daily total of 900 ringed on 7 December was the highest ever, apart from the particularly productive 1979/80 season (when this figure was exceeded on no less than seven dates).

The first visit, of four nights from 3 to 8 November, produced no birds at all: nights were either totally clear or with high cloud. Tsavo had had a little early rain before this visit but generally the park was dry.

The December visit, from 2nd to 11th, provided the only ringing activity of the season; four nights were all clear with very few or no birds, while the remaining six nights were misty with appreciable falls of migrants. Palaearctic birds ringed - and their scientific names - are given in Table 1. The second column shows the individual species totals expressed as a percentage of the mean for the previous eleven years. As would be expected, this year's means are all low, although (of the four major Ngulia species) the Sprosser and River Warbler figures make a reasonable showing.

As noted in other years (see, for example, *Scopus* 3: 19-25), the variation in catch composition often varies substantially from night to night. This is

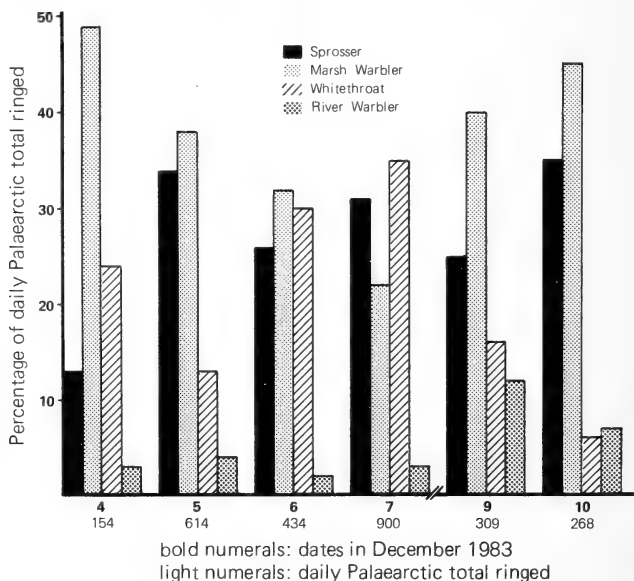


Fig. 1. Comparison of the daily catch, as percentages, of the four main Palaearctic species during December 1983

TABLE 1

Numbers of Palaearctic night migrants ringed at Ngulia Safari Lodge between October and February in the years 1969-1984\*

Species	1983/4* total	%**	Total 1969- 1984*
Scops Owl <i>Otus scops</i>	1	-	2
Eurasian Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	3	12	229
Eurasian Roller <i>Coracias garrulus</i>	2	50	36
Eurasian Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i> [caught at night]	2	11	126
Rufous Bush Chat <i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	6	9	735
Iranian <i>Irania gutturalis</i>	27	25	1226
Sprosser <i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	814	77	12 595
Nightingale <i>L. megarhynchos</i>	19	47	464
Rock Thrush <i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	8	87	100
Isabelline Wheatear <i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	2	33	68
Northern Wheatear <i>O. oenanthe</i>	4	50	92
Pied Wheatear <i>O. pleschanka</i>	2	53	36
Basra Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus griseldis</i>	24	55	509
Marsh Warbler <i>A. palustris</i>	914	49	21 573
Reed Warbler <i>A. scirpaceus</i>	1	19	61
Upcher's Warbler <i>Hippolais languida</i>	17	75	269
Olive-tree Warbler <i>H. olivetorum</i>	3	12	281
Olivaceous Warbler <i>H. pallida</i>	8	28	323
River Warbler <i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	132	63	2447
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	67	63	1233
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	18	47	441
Whitethroat <i>S. communis</i>	657	40	18 648
Barred Warbler <i>S. nisoria</i>	14	34	477
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1	2	613
Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	5	7	754
Red-tailed Shrike <i>L. isabellinus</i>	18	34	615
Number of species	26		26
Total	2769		63 953

\* 1983/84 season - no ringing in January or February 1984

\*\* The autumn 1983 total expressed as a percentage of mean of the years 1972/73 to 1982/83 for each species

Totals of Palaearctic species ringed in previous autumn seasons but not in the 1983/84 one are as follows: Little Bittern *Ixobrychus m. minutus* 4, Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora* 1, Corncrake *Crex crex* 7, Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana* 1, Eurasian Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* 2, Lesser Cuckoo *C. poliocephalus* 1, Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* 6, Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* 13, Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* 2, Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* 2, Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* 27, Sedge Warbler *A. schoenobaenus* 65, Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* 2, Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* 1, Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* 2, Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* 48, Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* 19, Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* 3 and Red-backed x Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius collurio* x *isabellinus* hybrid 8.

From December 1969 a total of 64 167 Palaearctic birds of 44 species has been ringed at Ngulia during southward migration.

shown for six nights this season in Fig. 1. The Whitethroat may be singled out for special mention: overall (1969 to the present), 29 per cent of all birds ringed at Ngulia have been Whitethroats as against the River Warbler's 3.8 per cent contribution; yet on 10 December the Whitethroat was down to less than 6 per cent of the day's catch compared with just over 7 per cent for the River Warbler.

Numbers of Afrotropical birds moving at night were low. Only ten of the commonest species, the Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei*, were caught and ringed yet a single example of the African race *erlangeri* of the Quail *C. coturnix* was found one night sitting on the bar and added to the Ngulia species list.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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#### ORNITHOLOGICAL PROJECTS IN EAST AFRICA, 1983

The following list includes all projects known to the Sub-Committee which, a) involved active field work during 1983, and b) were expected to culminate in publication in recognized journals. For professional workers, only their major projects are listed.

Allan, R.G. FAO/UNDP Quelea bird control project, Nairobi. Biology and management of quelea populations.

Angwin, D. see Cunningham-van Someren.

\*Ash, J.S. FAO/UNDP Quelea bird control project, Kampala, Uganda: a) Biology and management of quelea populations, b) with Carswell, M. and Pomeroy, D.E. Atlas of the birds of Uganda.

Backhurst, G.C., Nairobi: a) Eastern African Ringing Scheme, b) with Pearson, D.J., Migration studies at Ngulia, Tsavo National Park (West).

Carswell, M., Kampala, Uganda: a) \*Avifauna of the Kampala area, b) with Ash, J.S. and Pomeroy, D.E., Atlas of the birds of Uganda.

Cunningham-van Someren, G.R., National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi: a) Taxonomic study of the White-starred Forest Robin *Pogonocichla stellata*, b) Nectar and other food items taken by birds, c) Roosting behaviour of birds, d) National Bird Strike Committee of the Directorate of Civil Aviation, e) with Angwin, D., Ecology of the avifauna of Kora National Reserve, Kenya, as part of the National Museums of Kenya and Royal Geographical Society Research Project, f) Conservation status of birds in Kenya for the Red Data Book.



- Elliott, C.C.H., FAO/UNDP Quelea bird control project, Arusha, Tanzania: biology and management of quelea populations.
- Emlen, S.T. see Wrege, P.
- \*Haas, V., Max-Planck-Institut, Lake Nakuru NP, Kenya: Social behaviour of the Anteater Chat *Myrmecocichla aethiops*.
- Harper, D. see Taylor, C.
- Horne, J.F.M., Box 24622, Nairobi: Comparative vocal communication in Kenyan and other African birds, especially the white-eyes Zosteropidae and cuckoo shrikes Campephagidae.
- Kalina, J., Michigan State University, U.S.A.: Biology of the Black and White Casqued Hornbill *Bycanistes subcylindricus* in Kibale Forest, Uganda.
- Leisler, B., Max-Planck-Institut, Lake Nakuru NP: Ecology of wintering wheatears *Oenanthe* spp.
- Lewis, A.D., Nairobi: a) with Pomeroy, D.E., Atlas of the birds of Kenya, b) vocalizations of the Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flava*.
- Meadows, B.S., U.K./Saudi Arabia: East African wildfowl counts.
- \*Nicolai, J., University of Wilhelmshaven, West Germany: Host species of the Steel-blue Whydah *Vidua hypocherina*.
- \*Oelke, H., University of Goettingen, West Germany: Birds of native and exotic forests in western Kenya.
- Pearson, D.J., University of Nairobi: a) Status, seasonality and distribution of Palaearctic migrants in southern and eastern Kenya, b) see Backhurst, G.C. b).
- Pomeroy, D.E., Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda: a) with Lewis, A.D., Atlas of the birds of Kenya, b) with Ash, J.S. and Carswell, M., Atlas of the birds of Uganda.
- Reyer, H.E., Max-Planck-Institut, Lake Nakuru NP: Behaviour of Pied Kingfishers *Ceryle rudis* at Lake Nakuru and Homa Bay, Lake Victoria.
- Short, L.L., American Museum of Natural History, New York and Horne, J.F.M., Box 24622, Nairobi: Taxonomy and behaviour, especially vocal, of barbets, honeyguides and woodpeckers Piciformes.
- Stevenson, T., Baringo, Kenya: Birds of the Lake Baringo area.
- Taylor, C.D. (with Harper, D.), University of Leicester, U.K.: Food preferences of the Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* at Lake Naivasha, Kenya.
- Taylor, P.B., Nairobi: EANHSE East African Nest Record Scheme.
- Turner, D.A., Nairobi: Atlas of the birds of Tanzania.
- Wrege, P., Cornell University, Ithaca, U.S.A.: Social behaviour of White-fronted Bee-eaters *Merops bullockoides* at Lake Nakuru NP (in association with S.T. Emlen).

\* = Field work completed in 1983

[Compiled by A.D. Lewis]

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## New Exchange Publication

*The Babbler* - Journal of the Botswana Bird Club

[Compiled by D.A. Turner]

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[Indices prepared by G.C. Backhurst]



John Kimunya

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*Continued inside back cover*

# SCOPUS

## THE DISTRIBUTION OF, AND OTHER NOTES ON, SOME BIRDS OF TANZANIA

N.R. Fuggles-Couchman

The publication of *Birds of East Africa* (Britton 1980) was a most important event in East African ornithology. As Britton remarked in the preface of the book, East African ornithology, and the few ornithologists then working in East Africa, would have benefited greatly from such a work in the 1950s. But the work of the much larger number of ornithologists active in the field in the sixties and seventies would have made essential the publication of a new and up-to-date work, such as we now have, although no doubt the labour involved would have been greatly reduced.

Because of the immensity of the task facing the authors of *Birds of East Africa*, and because of the uneven scatter of ornithologists in East Africa, and particularly in the past in Tanzania, it was inevitable that the range given of many species would be incomplete, or ill-defined, as is the case with many Tanzanian birds. In part this is due to a lack of diligence in the publication of records by the present author and others, but in part it would seem to be due to an oversight of certain published work.

It is hoped that the publication of the following notes will help make the information given in *Birds of East Africa* for Tanzania rather more complete, but it is appreciated that many of the notes could be considered as of only historic interest. However, some may give incentive to someone to check the present position in the field while others will serve as a record of an earlier presence of species no longer found in the area because of habitat destruction by man, climatic changes, or other factors.

### SYSTEMATIC LIST

The nomenclature and order of families and species used in Britton (1980) have been followed in this paper. Numbers in brackets following reference to specimens are identification numbers of skins deposited at the British Museum (Natural History).

#### *Ixobrychus sturmi* Dwarf Bittern

In view of the dates given for this species, it is worth recording its presence in Dar es Salaam District as late as August in 1953, and a young bird in the same area in May 1956.

*Ardea cinerea* Grey Heron

While agreeing with the general statement in Britton (1980) that this species is usually solitary and never numerous, I did find a flock of 100 birds perched in low shrubs along the stream entering Lake Basuto, Mbulu District, in November 1960.

*Ardea melanocephala* Black-headed Heron

A large colony of this species was found nesting in May 1959 in the tops of partially submerged *Acacia tortilis* in Hombolo Dam, Dodoma District only one year after that very large dam had filled. The heronry was among considerable numbers of nesting Cattle Egrets *Bulbulcus ibis*, Long-tailed Cormorants *Phalacrocorax africanus*, Darters *Anhinga rufa* and Yellow-billed Storks *Mycteria ibis*.

*Egretta ardesiaca* Black Heron

In addition to its more typical habitat of lakes and coastal creeks, this species was to be found on such large rivers as the Kilombero. Several flocks of 20-40 birds were present along the River Mnyera (the upper waters of the Kilombero) in September 1934. It was also recorded in small numbers of from one to four birds in irrigated rice at Kilingali, Kilosa District, in April 1952.

*Egretta intermedia* Yellow-billed Egret

Britton (1980) suggests that this species is seldom found in littoral habitats and that it is seldom numerous. In Dar es Salaam it was, and still is (Howell in MS), regularly to be seen flighting in the evening across the entrance channel to the harbour, often in considerable numbers, together with flocks of Cattle Egrets *Bulbulcus ibis*, heading for the mangroves to roost.

*Gorsachius leuconotus* White-backed Night Heron

To the few localities listed by Britton (1980) should be added the Mangola Springs, Mbulu District, where a bird was found in January 1960. The Mangola Springs were surrounded by riverine forest and heavy vegetation, the typical habitat of this species.

*Ciconia abdimii* Abdim's Stork

This species occurred intermittently in the Eastern Province, especially in years of locust invasions. In 1932 considerable flocks were present in Morogoro and Kilosa Districts among flying swarms, and in January to March 1933 they were in large flocks in Kilosa District where, after destroying quantities of adult locusts, they hunted out bands of hoppers, often destroying them completely. In February 1937 small numbers occurred on the old Dar es Salaam airport.

In the Northern Province flocks were present in scattered tree-grassland near Monduli in February 1943, and in arable fields near Arusha. In February 1946 large flocks were on the Ardai Plains and at Mbulumbulu, while in 1959 enormous flocks were present near Meserani Dam in a year of heavy army worm *Spodoptera exempta* infestation, when the storks played a major part in their control.

*Mycteria ibis* Yellow-billed Stork

This species was nesting in small numbers on the edges of large colonies of other water birds at Hombolo Dam in May 1959 (see Black-headed Heron above). In August of the same year several hundred of this species were present on the western side of Lake Manyara, on rushy mud banks running out into shallow water.

*Threskiornis aethiopica* Sacred Ibis

Another species that was nesting, in small numbers, in the partially submerged



*Acacia tortilis* in Hombolo Dam in mid May 1959, when there were young in the nests. The trees were shared with Darters *Anhinga rufa*, which outnumbered the ibises.

*Dendrocygna bicolor* Fulvous Whistling Duck

After the very heavy short rains in November and December 1961, Eluanata Dam, to the east of Monduli, filled fully for the first time for some years. This, and the following species of ducks, were all nesting on the dam in January and February 1962. Two nests of this species were found on 26 February, one with eight eggs, just on the point of hatching. Eggs measured were slightly larger than the size given in Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1957), at 55 x 43 mm.

*Anas erythrorhynchos* Red-billed Teal

One nest found on 26 February at Eluanata Dam contained eight eggs.

*Anas penelope* Wigeon

There is a published record for this species from south and west of Arusha National Park, the southern limit given by Britton (1980): at Meserani Dam in Masailand, south of Monduli. Believed then to have been the first record for Tanganyika, up to 25 Wigeon were seen by Elliott on the dam from 2 February to 7 March 1943 (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946).

*Netta erythrophthalma* Southern Pochard

Two nests at Eluanata Dam, each with three eggs measuring 59 x 45 mm, were found on 26 February 1962.

*Oxyura maccoa* Maccoa Duck

Three nests were found on 21 February 1962 at Eluanata Dam with one, six and eight eggs. Three eggs averaged 64 x 52 mm.

Several hundred of this species were found on Lake Embagai, Crater Highlands, in January 1945 (Elliott & Fuggles-Couchman 1948), and it has been reported from near Singida.

*Sarkidiornis melanotos* Knob-billed Duck

In view of the few dated nesting records for Tanzania, it is worth noting a female (containing a fully developed egg with shell) shot on 2 November 1952 at Kilingali, Kilosa District.

This species occurred in flocks of up to 200, and frequently of over 100, in the War Wheat Scheme wheat fields on the Arday Plains in May 1944, and in April 1959 large flocks were seen in wheat fields at Ol Molog, on the northwestern slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro.

*Thalassornis leuconotus* White-backed Duck

This was the commonest duck nesting on Eluanata Dam in 1962 when 15 nests were found between 7 January and 26 February. Most of the later nests contained from 8 to 13 eggs, those measured averaging 62.5 x 49 mm. Almost without exception the nests had a dense hood of grass or rushes constructed over them. In mid October 1958 there were a number of White-backed Ducks on a partially filled Eluanata Dam with a considerable number of ducklings up to about one month old.

*Gyps africanus* African White-backed Vulture

Nests with young have been recorded in August 1958 in *Acacia xanthophloea* in Ngorongoro Crater, and in June 1944 in a large *Acacia tortilis* on the western edge of the Arday Plains, Masailand. An adult was at the first nest, apparently shading a nestling. The second nest contained one chick.

*Circus ranivorus* African Marsh Harrier

A female was seen carrying nesting material on 31 January 1952 at Kilingali Swamps, Kilosa District.

*Circaetus fasciolatus* Southern Banded Snake Eagle

In addition to the inland localities given by Britton (1980) this species was recorded in August 1938 in the Nguru Mountains, Morogoro District, at 1600 m, in forest on the southern side of the pass to Maskati.

*Accipiter minullus* Little Sparrowhawk

In view of the local nature of the distribution of this uncommon hawk, it is worth noting its occurrence in *Balanites*-scattered tree grassland west of Monduli at 1400 m, in November 1942 and at Mbulumbulu in June 1945, at 1750 m, in scattered *Acacia tortilis* in mainly open grassland.

*Accipiter ovampensis* Ovampo Sparrowhawk

I have only one record of this rare hawk in thirty-two years in Tanzania. A bird was stooping at small passerines near a well at Nondwa, Dodoma District, in March 1957. The Nondwa area is typical Central Province dry thorn country, dominated by *Acacia tortilis*. After stooping, the hawk circled several times overhead, gaining height, and providing excellent views of the plumage.

*Accipiter rufiventris* Rufous Sparrowhawk

The only records given for this species in Tanzania by Britton (1980) are from Arusha and Songea. It has also been found in Nainokanoka, Crater Highlands over *Crotolaria* scrub at the edge of vestigial forest, in January 1945, and another was watched hawking a weaver on the edge of Lake Manyara, near the forest area, in August 1959.

*Aquila pomarina* Lesser Spotted Eagle

A considerable concourse of at least 200 of this eagle was seen some 65 km southwest of Arusha, on the Great North Road, on 30 November 1961. The eagles were coming in from the south, and may have been wintering birds on local movement. They were flying at various heights, a few at considerable height, and were landing in open grassland with scattered trees and bush, in the lower foothills of Burko Mountain, only a short distance from the road, providing an excellent opportunity to study the plumage in some detail.

*Aquila verreauxi* Verreaux's Eagle

In addition to the five localities where this species has been recorded by Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott (1946), ranging from Samunge in northern Masailand to Mt Lenjogi in the south of that district, it was also seen on the rift wall above Engaruka, in January 1945.

*Buteo buteo* Common Buzzard

This species was numerous at Mbulumbulu on 1 March 1946, resting in large bare trees, providing another record of this buzzard's movement up the rift valley on northern migration.

*Buteo tachardus* Mountain Buzzard

The most westerly locality given by Britton (1980) for this species in north-eastern Tanzania is Arusha National Park. In fact there are published records well to the west of Arusha, in the Crater Highlands (Elliott & Fuggles-Couchman 1948), and on Mt Hanang (Fuggles-Couchman 1953). It has also been recorded from Monduli Mountain in November 1942.

*Aviceda cuculoides* Cuckoo Hawk

In addition to the published records of Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott (1946), one of which is for the late date of 30 January, from Ngayage 100 km north of Kilosa, there is another published record (Elliott & Fuggles-Couchman 1948) from Lengopiron, Crater Highlands, also in January. I have also seen the Cuckoo Hawk in December in Arusha. These records are of particular interest because of their dates, compared with those given by Britton (1980) for records from Tanzania.

*Falco amurensis* Eastern Red-footed Falcon

In view of only three January records for Tanzania given by Britton (1980), it is worth noting a specimen, a male (46/2) collected at Ol Molog, on the north-western slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro at 1650 m on 21 January 1946. It was one of three of this species seen together on that occasion.

*Falco biarmicus* Lanner Falcon

No specific localities are quoted by Britton (1980) for this uncommon falcon in Tanzania, and it is worth drawing attention to its presence in the Ngamat area of the Crater Highlands in February 1946 at 2000 m. I also have records of single birds at Ol Molog in April 1959 in open arable and grasslands, and at Mbulumbulu in April 1946 in similar habitat, at 1650 m.

*Falco concolor* Sooty Falcon

Britton (1980) mentions the lack of dated records of the movements of this species in East Africa. It is therefore worth noting the occurrence of small numbers of Sooty Falcons among large numbers of (presumably) Palaearctic Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* which were moving eastwards over Mbulumbulu, Crater Highlands, on 7 December 1943. I also have a record of a single bird on 10 April 1957 between Songea and the Matengo Hills, southwestern Tanzania.

*Falco dickensoni* Dickenson's Kestrel

This species ranges west of Morogoro to Kilosa District. It was seen in considerable numbers near Kilosa in April 1937, where it was hawking adult locusts over cultivations with scattered *Kigelia* trees, in which the birds frequently perched. It has also been recorded in *Brachystegia* woodland in the Mikumi area, 70 km south of Kilosa, in December 1951, and during the same year it was frequent at Kilingali, in the more open areas in *Combretum* bushland, particularly round the edges of the large swamp where there were a few trees.

*Falco tinnunculus* Kestrel

Considerable numbers of, presumably, the nominate race were seen over Mbulumbulu on 7 December 1943, moving eastwards in company with a small number of Sooty Falcons. Large numbers have also been recorded from the Ngare Ol Motonyi area near Arusha when on northward passage on 19 February 1943.

*Polihierax semitorquatus* Pygmy Falcon

This species ranges well to the east of the range given by Britton (1980) in Tanzania. A pair was seen mating on 24 June 1942 at Ngulu, at the southern foot of the North Pare Mountains, in dry thornbush. A single bird, no doubt a wanderer, was also seen in *Combretum* bush near the River Kilombero in August 1953, south of the Ifakara ferry.

*Coturnix chinensis* Blue Quail

In view of the few October records quoted by Britton (1980), all from Kenya, attention should be drawn to a record from Mbulumbulu on 10 October 1942, in *Themeda* grassland (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946).

*Francolinus sephaena* Crested Francolin

Britton (1980) gives the range of the race *grantii* as south to Dodoma. It should be extended eastwards from there to include northern Kilosa District at Geiro, where a male (42/18) was collected in 1942. This species also occurred at Ngulu, Same District, presumably attributable to the same race.

*Francolinus squamatus* Scaly Francolin

The range of this species extends east from the Arusha National Park (the eastern limit given by Britton (1980)) to the western slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro, where it was found in fringing bush along the Ngare Nairobi North River at 1790 m.

*Acryllium vulturinum* Vulturine Guineafowl

Britton (1980) gives the range of this species in Tanzania as east of Mt Kili-manjaro to Mombo. It was also to be found well to the southwest of Kiliman-jaro in the semi-arid plains 48 km south of Arusha. A covey of young birds, just able to fly, was seen with adults on 22 June 1954.

*Guttera pucherani* Kenya Crested Guineafowl

In 1943 this species occurred in the forest above Mbulumbulu, Crater High-lands, at 1850 m, and north of Lake Manyara, a locality which does not appear to be included in the range given by Britton (1980). I also came across it on several occasions in the Pugu forest, inland from Dar es Salaam, in 1935 and 1955.

*Crex egregia* African Crake

This species was frequent in the swampy grasslands at Kilingali, Kilosa Dis-trict, between February and the end of May 1952. A male (52/3) collected on 20 February 1952 had enlarged gonads. An October 1958 record from Boma la Ngombe, near Moshi, is also worth noting in relation to dates given by Britton (1980). I have also a record from the Serengeti in June 1962.

*Gallinula chloropus* Common Moorhen

In view of the local occurrence of this species it is worth noting its pres-ence in northeastern Tanzania at Mbulumbulu in 1942; Lake Tlawi, Mbulu Dis-trict in 1943; Eluanata Dam and Boma la Ngombe in 1958. It was nesting on Eluanata Dam on 1 January 1962 when two nests had incomplete clutches of two and three eggs.

*Porphyrrio alleni* Allen's Gallinule

In view of the apparent paucity of records for this species in interior Tan-zania (Britton 1980) it is worth noting its presence on a small lake 25 km south of Kilosa in June 1932, when one was found alive in a native trap on the edge of the lake, and released. Another was seen at Eluanata Dam in October 1958.

*Porphyrrio porphyrio* Purple Gallinule

The Purple Gallinule was found in northeastern Tanzania on Lakes Tlawi and Basuto, Mbulu District, in September 1943 and November 1960; at the fresh water lake in Ngorongoro in August 1958; at Boma la Ngombe and on Eluanata Dam in October 1957 and January 1962. Several nests were found on Eluanata in 1962 between 1 and 7 January. Most nests contained four eggs and by 21 February, when coots and ducks still had eggs, no gallinule nests were found with eggs.

This species tended to nest in deeper water than the Red-knobbed Coots *Ful-ica cristata*, and while the latter favoured isolated clumps of rush, the gallinules' nests were mostly just inside denser patches of vegetation. A series of six eggs measured averaged 52.5 x 37.5 mm.

*Rallus caerulescens* African Water Rail

To the few localities given by Britton (1980) for this species in Tanzania should be added Itigi, on the Central Railway, where it was watched on the large ponds near the station in May 1956.

*Fulica cristata* Red-knobbed Coot

Britton (1980) remarks that temporal patterns of occurrence are poorly doc-umented, so that the following observations may be of some interest if read in conjunction with other information.

On 12 September 1943 there appeared to be a thousand or more on Lake Tlawi, and on Lake Basuto they were very numerous in November 1960. In the same year they were numerous on the freshwater lake in Ngorongoro Crater on 3 Aug-

ust. On 13 October 1958 coots were numerous at Eluanata Dam, which also held a moderate population in January and February 1962, when the birds were breeding there. Lake Duluti, near Arusha, held many birds in March 1945.

In contrast with these records, the freshwater areas of Lake Embagai, Crater Highlands, held only one bird in January 1945, and at the salt pans in the Ngare Nanyuki area between Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt Meru, I could find only one pair in each of the two years, in May and December.

*Podica senegalensis* African Finfoot

In addition to its occurrence at Miwalleni Springs, east of Moshi and in the lowlands below Kilimanjaro, H.F.I. Elliott (pers. comm.) found the Finfoot frequent in the Kikuletwa River in the Sanya Plains in 1943, an environment now largely wrecked by the construction of Kilimanjaro International Airport.

*Eupodotis melanogaster* Black-bellied Bustard

This species was a scarce resident in the lower areas of wooded grassland at Mbulumbulu at 1600 m in 1942, and was also to be found in the rift valley north of Lake Manyara in 1945.

*Eupodotis ruficrista* Buff-crested Bustard

This species occurred at Engaruka, well to the west of the range suggested by Britton (1980) in Tanzania. H.F.I. Elliott and I found it in close association with the previous species, with no apparent difference in choice of habitat, in 1945.

*Eupodotis senegalensis* White-bellied Bustard

In 1942 the White-bellied Bustard occurred to the southeast of Kilimanjaro in Same District, in the open grassland and scattered *Acacia tortilis* area to the north of Same, and thus somewhat south of the range suggested by Britton (1980) for northeastern Tanzania. It was also a scarce resident in the rift valley near Engaruka.

*Rostratula benghalensis* Painted Snipe

An extremely elusive bird in east and northeastern Tanzania. A pair was seen in flooded grassland at Kilingali in May 1952, and a nest with four eggs was found at Lake Manyara in August 1959.

*Charadrius asiaticus* Caspian Plover

Though not numerous, this species occurred at Dar es Salaam fairly regularly, both in the town on the Gymkhana Club sports fields, and scattered in open areas to the north of the town. My records are all for September in the years 1955 to 1958.

*Pluvialis squatarola* Grey Plover

I have one unusually early record of a flock of c. 100 at the edge of Msasani salt lake, Dar es Salaam, on 6 August 1955. Otherwise all records fall within the period September to May given by Britton (1980), up to 19 May in 1956.

*Vanellus crassirostris* Long-toed Plover

In Tanzania this species occurs rather further to the east than suggested by Britton (1980). It was found in the main swamp area at Kilingali, in small numbers in December and January 1951/52.

*Vanellus lugubris* Senegal Plover

Although the majority of my records for this species from Dar es Salaam and Mafia Island fall in the period May to August, with the latest date 17 August at Dar es Salaam, I also have two unusual records, one of birds heard calling in flight over Dar es Salaam in February 1956, the other of their presence at Msasani in November 1956. They were also common in burnt wooded grassland at Kingolwira, Morogoro District, in November to December 1938.

*Vanellus senegallus* Wattled Plover

To the range given by Britton (1980) should be added the River Ruaha on the southern boundary of Kilosa District, a locality lying rather to the east of the general range given by him. The species was present there in August 1932.

*Actitis hypoleucos* Common Sandpiper

In addition to the main habitats in littoral and wetland localities, the Common Sandpiper was frequently found overwintering, usually solitarily, on rocky mountain rivers in the Northern Province. It favoured the River Weru-weru above above Lyamungu, in the southern foothills of Mt Kilimanjaro, at 1500 m, and the River Themí above Arusha in February. One bird was found by the stream in Ol Moti Crater at the end of January. In September a solitary bird was present near the wheat fields on the Arдай Plains for a week, and in April another was found at the edge of a new dam on the Arдай. This species was also frequently to be seen on the rocky rivers of the Uluguru Mountains, especially on the River Mgeta in the west.

*Tringa stagnatilis* Marsh Sandpiper

Two birds were present at the salt pans on the Arusha - Ngare Nairobi road on the late date of 20 May 1945.

*Tringa totanus* Redshank

The only locality in the Northern Province where I found this species at all numerous was in the Maji ya Moto area on the west side of Lake Manyara in November 1958 when there were c. 50 birds. Other localities where one to five birds have been seen include the salt pans on the Arusha - Ngare Nairobi road in December 1942; a newly filled small dam on the Arдай Plains, where three birds remained for nearly a month in March - April 1946, and five in flooded grassland at Kilingali in April 1952.

*Xenus cinereus* Terek Sandpiper

Britton (1980) mentions records of single birds from many inland sites mainly on passage, September to November. A male collected by Elliott at Meserani Dam, Masailand, in February 1942 may therefore be of interest (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946).

*Gallinago nigripennis* African Snipe

No localities are mentioned for this species in northeastern Tanzania by Britton (1980). I found it at 1300 m at the salt pans on the Arusha - Ngare Nairobi road and on the Arдай at a similar altitude, in December and May between the years 1942 and 1944, and several birds were flushed along the stream in Ol Moti Crater at 2800 m in January 1945.

*Himantopus himantopus* Black-winged Stilt

The largest concentration of this species I ever found in northeastern Tanzania was at the salt pans on the Arusha - Ngare Nairobi road where I estimated that there were up to 1000 birds on 9 March 1945. That locality seemed to be particularly attractive to the Black-winged Stilt, for in December 1942 they were extremely numerous there, although in smaller numbers than those in 1945. In May 1946 only some 20 birds were found. Lake Babati was another locality where large numbers were seen in November 1959 while Eluanata Dam and Meserani Dam held one or two birds in June 1946.

Further south it occurred in small numbers along the River Kilombero in September 1932 and at Lake Gombo, Kilosa District, in October 1934.

*Recurvirostra avosetta* Avocet

In addition to the breeding localities cited by Britton (1980) in Tanzania, I have also recorded three birds at Lake Tlawi in September 1943, and a pair at the salt pans, Arusha - Ngare Nairobi road, in March 1945. Britton mentions

breeding at Ngare Nairobi and that is probably the same locality to which I refer. The salt pans used to be known as the Ngare Nanyuki salt pans, to which settlement they were probably nearer than Ngare Nairobi.

*Dromas ardeola* Crab Plover

Britton (1980) speaks of flocks of hundreds wintering in the Dar es Salaam area. I have only two records of more than seven birds together at Dar in the 1930s and 1950s, and I never considered this species as particularly common there. Both records were made in early May when 'large' flocks (probably 50 to 100 birds) were seen at high tide on the shore at Mjimwema. There would appear to have been a notable increase in population in the past 30 years.

*Burhinus capensis* Spotted Thicknee

Britton (1980) mentions no specific localities for this species in Tanzania. Between 1938 and 1942 I have recorded it at Kibedya, in northern Kilosa District; at Ngare Nairobi and at the western end of the Ardai Plains, all localities in low rainfall areas.

*Burhinus vermiculatus* Water Thicknee

This species was well distributed along the River Kilombero from Ifakara to Malinyi in 1932.

*Rhinoptilus africanus* Two-banded Courser

I have records of this courser from localities somewhat east of the range given by Britton (1980) for Tanzania. They are at Kongwa, to the east of Dodoma in December 1947, and at Kileo, at the northern foot of the North Pare Mountains, some 110 km SSE of Amboseli, in June 1942. The most frequent sightings of this species in northeastern Tanzania used to be on the Mto wa Mbu flats between Makuyuni and Lake Manyara.

*Rhinoptilus chalcopterus* Violet-tipped Courser

The only localities in Tanzania from which I have records of this species were all in the eastern area. They include Kidodi, southern Kilosa District; in the central area of that district; in cultivations and miombo woodland round Morogoro, and on the Wami Plains to the north. Those records were all in July and August between 1931 and 1935. But I also have records from near Kilosa and at Kilingali in January and May 1952, and one from Kongwa in December 1947.

*Rhinoptilus cinctus* Heuglin's Courser

It is worth noting that the only record of this species I have for Tanzania was from the Serengeti in June 1962, an area which does not seem to fall within the range given by Britton (1980).

*Glareola pratincola* Common Pratincole

Flocks of this pratincole were very frequent for a short period on ploughed land at Kilingali in November 1951. In June 1952 flocks again appeared there after the long rains, and were again much in evidence on newly ploughed land.

*Chlidonias hybridus* Whiskered Tern

It is perhaps worth noting that the first active colony of this species in Tanzania was only found in January 1961, on the Eluanata Dam, Masailand (Fuggles-Couchman 1962). Up to that time searches at its best known haunt in northeastern Tanzania, Lake Babati, had proved fruitless, and the only record of breeding in Tanzania was of a young bird, able to fly, being fed by an adult at Dodoma (Thomas 1960).

*Chlidonias leucopterus* White-winged Black Tern

Although I have records of this species in northeastern Tanzania for every month except April and July, the largest flocks have been in May on the Ardai Plains, and in June and at the end of August at Lake Manyara. In May and June

the birds were in full breeding plumage, but the largest flock in August was composed mostly of birds in non-breeding dress. In the months September to March this species has been found in fair numbers at Lake Tlawi and Eluanata Dam in September; at Lake Babati in November and March, with one to five birds on the Ardai and at Meserani Dam in October and February.

*Sterna caspia* Caspian Tern

I can add two records of this species to the six mentioned by Britton (1980) for records south of Mida Creek (Kenya coast); both were near Dar es Salaam in October 1956.

*Rynchops flavirostris* African Skimmer

This was a common bird on the River Kilombero from Ifakara ferry westwards to about Kotkota in 1932 and again between 1952 and 1953. Two chicks were seen with an adult on 20 August 1953, when there were several parties of five to eight birds along the river. A single bird was seen at the Ifakara ferry at the end of May in 1952.

*Pterocles decoratus* Black-faced Sandgrouse

In my experience this species was in far smaller numbers in the general area rift valley - Kilimanjaro lowlands than the following two species. It occurred sparingly in the rift valley between Mto wa Mbu and Engaruka, but rarely on the Ardai Plains.

*Pterocles gutturalis* Yellow-throated Sandgrouse

This species occurred in small packs of three to 18 birds in the grasslands and cultivations at Kilingali in May 1952, well to the east of the general range given by Britton (1980) for Tanzania. Parties were first seen on 28 May, and up to 50 birds on 13 June. A male (52/5) shot at Kilingali on 17 June had barely enlarged gonads. The birds remained for about four weeks and then disappeared from the Kilingali area, only to return on 2 July when most were in pairs. Unfortunately I was unable to return to Kilingali to check on possible breeding in the area.

The Yellow-throat was by far the most numerous sandgrouse in the Northern Region, particularly in the area Ardai Plains - Meserani Dam in 1942 to 1947. Breeding was recorded as early as 7 July 1946 and very small chicks were seen with adults on 9 September 1943 on the Ardai Plains, near the wheatfields. Four eggs measured averaged 44.75 x 35.75 mm.

*Aplopelia larvata* Lemon Dove

Specific localities in Tanzania from which I have records of this dove include the Nguru Mountains at 1700 m in rain forest on the southern side in July 1961; the forests on the east and west slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro at 1850 to 1950 m in 1942 and 1946, and on Mt Hanang, in forests above Nangwa at 1900 m in February 1946. A male (42/71) collected on 26 December 1942 on Mt Kilimanjaro was in moult.

*Columba arquatrix* Olive Pigeon

In addition to Mts Kilimanjaro and Meru, the Crater Highlands and Mbulu Highlands, this species was frequent in and around the forest belt of Mt Hanang in February 1946, up to 2800 m. A nest found on 11 February 1946 contained one partially incubated egg which measured 38 x 31 mm.

*Columba delegorguei* Bronze-naped Pigeon

The general range given for this species by Britton (1980) would suggest that it does not occur in areas west and south of Arusha. In fact it has been recorded in the Mbulumbulu forest, Crater Highlands in 1943, and from the forest above Nangwa, Mt Hanang, at 2100 m in 1946. It was frequently heard in the wetter forest on the eastern side of that mountain.



*Columba guinea* Speckled Pigeon

In February 1945 large flocks of this species were feeding on arable on the Ardaï Plains. The crop and stomach of one shot were full of somewhat cylindrical black seeds, thought to be those of *Commelina benghalensis*, which was a rampant weed in the area. Otherwise, except round the hotel at Dodoma where there were numerous resident birds, I found it in only very small numbers of one to six from localities as far apart as Kilosa in 1952, the Crater Highlands and Mbulumbulu in 1945, and round the western foothills of Mt Meru, in June, July and August in 1945 to 1955.

*Streptopelia decipiens* Mourning Dove

The range in Tanzania as described by Britton (1980) for this species suggests that it does not occur east of the rift valley in more northerly parts of the country. It was in fact well distributed through the low rainfall areas of the rift valley and Engaruka to the Ardaï Plains, Meserani Dam and the lower country to the northeast of Mt Meru between 1942 and 1947. It was the commonest dove in the drier areas around Kilingali in 1951.

*Streptopelia lugens* Dusky Turtle Dove

The range of this species as given by Britton (1980) should more precisely be extended to include the Crater Highlands in Masailand, and north of Mbulu, where, in 1945, it was found in several localities including vestigial cedar forest at Nainokanoka; open grasslands at Olbalbal, north of Ngorongoro Crater; *Hagenia* trees at Ngamat, to the edge of the rift at Kavenjiro. A female collected at Kavenjiro on 3 February 1945 contained eggs in the oviduct. It also occurred in 1952 far to the south of Kilimanjaro, at Geiro, northern Kilosa, a few kilometres from the southern boundary of Masailand. At Geiro birds were seen flying down from the Ukaguru Mountains at 09:00 to feed on the fruits of numerous small bushes.

*Streptopelia senegalensis* Laughing Dove

In my experience in Tanzania this species is typically the dove of semi-arid areas with *Acacia tortilis* and *Commiphora* sp. None of my many records have come from any other type of country.

*Agapornis fischeri* Fischer's Lovebird

This species was found at Digo Digo, Sonjo, east of the Serengeti, in June 1959, thus somewhat extending the range given by Britton (1980). It was also numerous at Mangola Springs, a few kilometres southwest of Ngorongoro, in the Lake Eyasi depression, in January 1960.

*Poicephalus cryptoxanthus* Brown-headed Parrot

This parrot was recorded at Kongwa in December 1947, somewhat to the west of the range given by Britton (1980).

*Poicephalus meyeri* Brown Parrot

Localities from which I have records of the species to the east of the race *saturatus* include the *Combretum* bushlands of lower Mbulumbulu in May 1946, presumably that race, and east of the general range given by Britton (1980); in *Acacia tortilis* grassland 15 km east of Mt Hanang in February 1946, and at Kongwa, probably of the race *matschiei*, in December 1947.

*Chrysococcyx cupreus* Emerald Cuckoo

It is surprising that Britton (1980) does not specifically mention Mt Kilimanjaro among the localities listed for this species in Tanzania, where it was frequently heard calling during the period late June to December. It also occurred on Mt Hanang above Nangwa in February 1946, and in the Pugu Hills inland from Dar es Salaam in December 1953.

*Clamator glandarius* Great Spotted Cuckoo

Records from east and northeast Tanzania should be noted. A male (37/35) was collected at Msongozi, west Morogoro District, in October 1937 in *Brachystegia* woodland. Two were seen on the edge of Dodoma township in January 1954 and another was found on the Ardal Plains, in January 1959.

*Clamator jacobinus* Black and White Cuckoo

My records of this cuckoo include December 1942 and February 1945 in north-eastern Tanzania, in the Arusha and Engaruka rift valley areas; in March 1956 at the coast north of Dar es Salaam; in May 1956 near Musoma, western Tanzania, and a single bird was seen in the Serengeti National Park in June 1962.

*Cuculus canorus* Eurasian Cuckoo

In view of the scarcity of records of this species on southward passage in Tanzania, its presence at Mbulumbulu in November 1943 should be noted. A male (43/24) was collected in evergreen forest at 1850 m on 12 November, and two others were seen on 18 November in the same locality in open *Acacia* woodland at 1550 m. The stomach of the specimen was crammed with the remains of large hoary caterpillars 2½ to 5 cm long.

*Cuculus clamosus* Black Cuckoo

Britton (1980) was not able to trace any definite records in Tanzania west of 35°E. I have just one such record, a bird calling at Tarime, north Mara, on 19 May 1956, which is west of that line, if only by 60-odd kilometres.

My records of calling birds in and around Arusha have all been from December onwards, earlier than is suggested by Britton (1980) for northern Tanzania, and similar to dates from Tsavo and Arusha National Parks, quoted by him.

*Cuculus gularis* African Cuckoo

Records between 1933 and 1943 from Ulanga District at Mtimbira and from the Monduli area, Masailand, fall in the period November to April given by Britton (1980).

*Centropus grillii* Black Coucal

This species is certainly uncommon in Tanzania, but in addition to the localities given by Britton (1980) I have records from Kilingali in swampy grasslands in January 1952, where it was common. A female (52/1) collected then had a stomach filled almost entirely with small grasshoppers. It also occurred on the River Kilombero near Ifakara, in tall grass, at the time of the annual inundation of the valley in May 1957.

Britton also states that the Black Coucal disappears from the Serengeti after breeding in December to March. However, I have a record of one bird seen there in June 1962 and Schmidl (1982) lists a specimen for the same month. I also found it at Mto wa Mbu in April 1944.

*Bubo africanus* Spotted Eagle Owl [*Bubo capensis* Cape Eagle Owl]

Britton (1980) suggests that the Cape Eagle Owl may occur on Mt Hanang. During my survey of the birds of that mountain the only owl I encountered, other than the African Wood Owl *Ciccaba woodfordii*, was *Bubo africanus*, of which I obtained a female (46/28) on 7 February 1946. There is only a small area of moorland on Mt Hanang which held a very limited bird population and no owl was evident.

*Ciccaba woodfordii* African Wood Owl

The occurrence of this species at Mtii, South Pare Mountains, at 1400 m (male 42/15) on 18 June 1942 and on the southern slopes of Mt Hanang at 2300 m (male 46/52) on 13 February 1946 are worth noting. The first locality lies on the northeastern edge of the broad range given by Britton (1980), and that from Hanang adds definition to his range to the west.

*Glaucidium perlatum* Pearl-spotted Owlet

Among several records of this owl scattered through northeastern and eastern Tanzania, one from 3100 m on the western side of Mt Meru, just above the forest, is worth noting for the altitude, which is well above that given by Britton (1980). Its characteristic call was heard at first light on a climb of the mountain.

*Caprimulgus fraenatus* Dusky Nightjar

A female (42/36) collected from several at Mbulumbulu on 1 October 1942 had somewhat enlarged ovaries. The characteristic call was heard at Litembo in the Matengo Hills of Songea in April 1957, providing a further record for this species from southeastern Tanzania. It was also found at Gitingo on the east side of Mt Hanang in February 1946.

In the light of the appearance of numbers of this species at Ngulia (Tsavo, Kenya) in November to January (Britton 1980) it is worth noting the occurrence of large numbers at Ngare Nairobi at dusk in September 1944 from which a female (44/10) was collected. The birds were flying on to a dirt road from the surrounding grassland.

*Apus aequatorialis* Mottled Swift

To the localities given by Britton (1980) for this species in Tanzania can be added Kongwa, at the northern foot of Kiboriani, where many were seen in company with Alpine Swifts *A. melba* in July 1956; the Ardai Plains, where they were numerous in August 1958, and at Songea in April 1957.

*Apus apus* Eurasian Swift

Among records scattered over northern and eastern Tanzania the most interesting are of a flock of 200 to 300 birds at Kilingali one evening in November 1951, some flying low cleaving between the trees, some high up, slowly drifting south; and a very large concentration, larger than the flock at Kilingali, which spent two days around Ilonga, Kilosa District, on 10 and 11 January 1953 after heavy rain. Eurasian Swifts were first noticed passing Ilonga in October 1952, but the earliest record I have from Tanzania is 10 September 1942 at Ngare Nairobi.

*Apus melba* Alpine Swift

In addition to those localities in Tanzania given by Britton (1980), this bird has been recorded also from Kisangiro, at the northwestern foot of the North Pare Mountains, at 500 m on 22 October 1952; at Kongwa, Central Region, from 4 May to 20 May 1949 and on 1 July 1956, and at Iguguno, Singida District, on 5 September 1955. Kongwa lies at the northern foot of Kiboriani Mountain and the birds seen there in May and July suggest that the Alpine Swift may well have been breeding on the mountain.

*Neafrapus boehmi* Böhm's Spinetail

The range given in Britton (1980) for this species in Tanzania other than in the northeast, is imprecise in relation to the central area along the Central Railway. This spinetail occurred at Kongwa, where a 'considerable' number was seen circling over *Acacia tortilis*/*Adansonia* wood- and bushland at the northern foot of Mt Kiboriani in July 1949. Two birds were also seen at Malolo, in southwestern Kilosa District in July 1953, also in semi-arid country with baobabs. I believe that the presence of baobabs is important for breeding where this species occurs in semi-arid areas, as in an earlier record at Kongwa in 1947, a few birds constantly circled a large baobab and frequently disappeared into it.

*Apaloderma vittatum* Bar-tailed Trogon

While the following localities fall within the broad range given by Britton (1980), it is worth recording its presence in the forests above Mbulumbulu

at 1850 m in 1943 and at Kilomeni, North Pare Mountains, at 1550 m in 1942.

*Ceryle maxima* Giant Kingfisher

In addition to records of single birds from the Ngare Nairobi South River in forest at 1850 m in July 1945, from a small dam at Ngare Nairobi in December 1942, and from the Sanje River, Ulanga District in March 1933, the most interesting record was from the Tingida Swamp, Kilosa District, in March 1933 when three birds were seen along a small river running into the swamp.

*Halcyon leucocephala* Chestnut-bellied Kingfisher

Two localities where this species has been recorded in Tanzania would seem to lie outside the general range given by Britton (1980). They are at Engaruka on 3 February 1945 where it favoured fig trees along the stream, and at Monduli on 21 January 1943 in park-like grassland with a few scattered trees.

*Halcyon senegalensis* Woodland Kingfisher

In view of the lack of localities in northern and northeastern Tanzania mentioned by Britton (1980) it is worth recording the occurrence of this species at Mangola Springs in January 1960. I have no other records of this bird in northeastern Tanzania other than at Serengeti National Park in June 1962.

*Ispidina picta* Pygmy Kingfisher

In my experience, by no means a common bird in eastern and northeastern Tanzania. A male (31/6) was collected on the eastern slopes of the Uluguru Mountains in November 1931, above Kasanga at 1250 m. That was the only occasion on which I saw this species in Morogoro and Kilosa Districts. It occurred in March 1937 on the edge of the Pugu forest at Kisserawe, and I have a June record in 1942 from near the Ngare Nairobi North River in the western foothills of Mt Kilimanjaro.

*Merops bullockoides* White-fronted Bee-eater

The range given by Britton (1980) for Tanzania is imprecise and it is worth recording a breeding colony in the banks of the River Mbakana at Kissaki, southern Morogoro District on 16 September 1938, a locality which may or may not lie within the range indicated.

In northeastern Tanzania it has been recorded in February 1945 from the edge of the Crater Highlands at Kavenjiro at 1800 m, well to the west of Mt Meru, and it was seen in March 1946 at 2400 m in *Hagenia* forest on the western slopes of Mt Meru, an altitude well above the altitudinal range given by Britton. It was breeding in December 1959 near the Great North Road in the West Meru area at c. 1550 m.

*Merops hirundineus* Swallow-tailed Bee-eater

My records for this species contain three October dates, in 1934, 1935 and 1952, rather later than most records (Britton 1980) and that from Dar es Salaam rather earlier than that quoted by him. A pair was seen hawking on the open flats near the Ifakara ferry, River Kilombero; a pair was recorded at Sanje, Ulanga District, and several were seen in October near Mzenza, Dar es Salaam District, from which a male (35/46) with enlarged gonads was collected. I also have an August record, in 1938, from Turiani, northern Morogoro District.

*Merops oreobates* Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater

I have a record of this species 100 km south of the Crater Highlands (Britton 1980), from Dareda, near the rift wall in southeastern Mbulu District, at 1400 m on 22 February 1959. It was a young bird which might well have been bred in the area.

*Phoeniculus minor* Abyssinian Scimitarbill

Britton (1980) makes no specific mention of this species' range in northeast

Tanzania where it was widely distributed in 1942 to 1959 in *Acacia tortilis* and *A. drepanolobium* scattered tree and bushland in lower rainfall areas, ranging from Katesh at the southern foot of Mt Hanang, Mbulu District, to Makuyuni and Monduli, to the lowlands north of Mt Meru and between Mts Meru and Kilimanjaro, to Gonja, between the South Pare Mountains and the West Usambara Mountains.

*Smithornis capensis* African Broadbill

There are records of, presumably, the race *albigularis* (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946) well to the east of the Bahi area of Dodoma District, which appear to have been overlooked by Britton (1980). This species was found from Kibaya, southern Masailand, in dense thicket and riverine bush to the Mpwapwa border, 50 km to the southeast in 1944.

*Mirafraga albicauda* White-tailed Bush Lark

Britton (1980) states that this species is sparingly distributed in northern Tanzania and mentions only the Serengeti and Arusha National Parks. Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott (1946) found it a common bird in the short grass plains between Arusha and the western rift wall, particularly on the Arda Plains and at Engaruka in the rift valley.

*Mirafraga cantillans* Singing Bush Lark

The range of this species extends well to the west of Arusha, as far as Engaruka (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946). These authors also recorded a male with partially enlarged gonads from the Sanya Plains between Mt Kilimanjaro and Mt Meru, in December 1942. This date is of interest in view of the period March to August given by Britton for the occurrence of this species in northern Tanzania.

*Delichon urbica* House Martin

An overwintering locality not specifically mentioned by Britton (1980) is Mt Hanang, where 20 birds were seen between 11 and 13 February 1945. They were in company with other hirundines and were seen over grassland at 1950 m and round Werther Peak at 3200 m (Fuggles-Couchman 1953).

*Hirundo daurica* Red-rumped Swallow

The range of this species (Britton 1980) should be extended further south to include Mahenge, 1100 m, from where I have a record on 27 May 1952.

*Hirundo griseopygia* Grey-rumped Swallow

Britton (1980) overlooks published records of this species in northeastern Tanzania, where it was a regular visitor to the Arda Plains between early May and the middle of October (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946). It has also been recorded from the River Kilombero where up to 200 birds were seen on 6 November 1932; from the northwestern slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro in July 1943; scattered over the Engamat - Olmoti Crater area of the Crater Highlands in January 1945; from the lower slopes of Mt Hanang where two birds were seen in February 1946, and from Kiligali where up to 100 were present in April and May 1952.

*Parus albiventris* White-bellied Tit

The range given for this species in Tanzania by Britton (1980) should be extended from Dodoma well to the east to include southern Masailand (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946) and northern Kilosa District at Idibo, 1280 m. A breeding male was collected by H.F.I. Elliott in November at Kijungu, not far from the western border of Handeni District, and I collected another male (32/16) at the same place in August 1932.

*Cercomela sordida* Alpine Chat

Britton (1980) considers that the reported occurrence of this species on Mt

Meru requires confirmation. I was familiar with this chat in the Crater Highlands and saw several on the upper eastern slopes of Mt Meru in January 1960 when on the approach to the secondary cone in the crater, which three of us climbed. The chats were seen at c. 2500 m in short grass and shrubby areas.

*Cisticola cinereola* Ashy Cisticola

The range of this species extends beyond the Arusha/Longido area (Britton 1980) to Engaruka in the rift valley to the west, and to Kileo, 770 m, at the northern foot of the North Pare Mountains, to the east (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946).

*Macronyx ameliae* Rosy-breasted Longclaw

Britton (1980) mentions records of this species from northern Tanzania. It was recorded by Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott (1946) from the western and northwestern slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro. In the Arusha area on the Ardai Plains it was sympatric with the Pangani Longclaw *M. aurantiigula* and occurred there in identical habitats.

*Creatophora cinerea* Wattled Starling

To the few breeding records for Tanzania mentioned in Britton (1980) should be added those from just west of Longido (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946), and in the Engaruka plains scattered over wide areas. Nests were found in May.

*Euplectes afer* Yellow-crowned Bishop

This species has been recorded breeding in eastern Tanzania, well to the east of Dodoma, the most easterly point of the range of the race *ladoensis* given by Britton (1980) for the central area of the country. In January 1952 it was numerous at Kilingali, Kilosa District, in the tall grasses fringing a long irrigation furrow, and in seasonal swampland where it was breeding. It also bred at Eluanata Dam near Monduli, in the north, in January 1962. Nests were about 120 cm above the water, in clumps of a tall *Panicum* grass.

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## APPENDIX: GAZETTEER

The following localities in Tanzania were not included in the Gazetteer in Britton (1980).

Locality	°/'S	°/'E
Basuto, Lake	4 36 35	05
Boma la Ngombe	3 20 37	10
Burkò, Mt	3 17 36	12
Dareda	4 29 35	39
Geiro	6 09 36	53
Gombo, Lake	6 43 36	50
Gonja	4 19 38	03
Hombolo Dam	5 51 35	54
Idibo	6 04 37	11
Ifakara	8 01 36	40
Ilonga	6 47 37	02
Katesh	4 33 34	56
Kibedya	6 08 36	55
Kidodi	7 36 37	01
Kijunguu	5 21 37	11
Kileo	3 29 37	37
Kilingali	6 57 37	06
Kilomeni	3 46 37	40
Kilosa	6 46 37	00
Kisangiro	3 37 37	34
Kissaki	7 27 37	46
Kongwa	6 12 36	26
Kota Kota	8 42 36	08
Lengopiron	2 54 35	56
Lenjogi, Mt	5 52 36	48

Locality	°/'S	°/'E
Lyamungu	3 10 37	15
Malinyi	8 55 36	01
Malolo	7 20 36	36
Mangola Springs	c. 3 25 35	26
Matale	6 14 37	22
Meserani Dam	3 30 36	24
Mikumi	7 24 37	00
Miwalleni Springs	c. 3 30 37	30
Mjimwema	6 50 39	20
Msongozi	7 04 37	23
Mto wa Mbu	3 23 35	51
Mzenga	7 00 38	47
Nainokanoka	3 04 35	40
Ngulu	4 03 37	52
Nondwa	6 25 35	19
Ol Molog	3 00 37	08
Rongai	3 05 37	36
Sanje River	7 42 36	59
Sanya Plains	3 17 37	03
Saranda	5 42 35	00
Sonjo	2 17 35	41
Tindiga Swamp	6 52 37	14
Tlawi, Lake	3 46 35	34
Turiani	6 11 37	35
Wami Plains	6 25 37	34

THE NIGHTINGALE *LUSCINIA MEGARHYNCHOS*, THE SPROSSER *LUSCINIA*  
*LUSCINIA* AND THE IRANIA *IRANIA GUTTURALIS* IN KENYA

D.J. Pearson

Two species of *Luscinia* occur commonly as Palaearctic visitors to Kenya, the Nightingale *L. megarhynchos*, which is primarily a wintering bird, and the Sprosser *L. luscinia*, which is mainly a passage migrant. Both are unobtrusive species of thicket and dense cover, which spend much time on or near the ground and seldom afford good views. They are active and vocal, however, at dawn and dusk, and although similar, the songs of the two species are sufficiently distinct to provide a valuable aid to identification. The Irania (or White-throated Robin) *Irania gutturalis* is a closely related Palaearctic species with a rather similar distribution in Kenya to that of the Sprosser. It is another skulking bird of low thicket, but tends to frequent drier habitat than the *Luscinia* species. On passage, however, all three birds are likely to be found together.

Distributions are mapped and compared here using a system similar to that previously employed for migrant passerines in Kenya and Uganda (Pearson 1978, 1982). In the species accounts which follow, statements unsupported by references are based on Pearson & Backhurst (1976a, b), annual accounts of migration at Ngulia Lodge for the years 1976 to 1982 published in *Scopus* (not listed under References), records listed in East African Bird Reports for 1977 to 1982 (published as the fifth issues of *Scopus* volumes 1 to 6 and not listed here under References) and unpublished records of the author and observers listed under Acknowledgements.

NIGHTINGALE *LUSCINIA MEGARHYNCHOS*

The Nightingale breeds throughout Europe to about 53°N, in the Magreb and in southwest Asia to about 100°E. The brightly coloured nominate race of Europe and Asia Minor is replaced by the larger, browner *africana* between the Black and Caspian Seas, and in Syria, Iraq and northern Iran, and by the even larger, greyer *hafizi* in the U.S.S.R. east of the Volga and the Caspian Sea (Vaurie 1959). The species winters in humid country in sub-Saharan Africa, to the edge of the Congo basin in the west and to Uganda and northern Tanzania in the east. In Kenya it occurs commonly from sea level to 1800 m, but is confined mainly to east central and southeastern areas, from Meru and Embu Districts, Nairobi and the Nguruman to the coast (Fig. 1).

It winters in green thicket, especially along the Athi and Tana Rivers and their tributaries, and in dry woodland and patchy cover bordering cultivation in Kitui, Kibwezi and Taita-Taveta Districts. It also occurs in coastal scrub and in doum palm and other thicket in open *Acacia* woodland. Wintering birds are commonly sedentary for weeks or months at a time. They defend territories aggressively and sing strongly between December and March.

The first birds may be recorded late in October (earliest date 22nd), but most arrive during November. Records at Ngulia Lodge have provided evidence of a small passage across Tsavo, concentrated mainly during early to mid November, but continuing through December. Most birds leave wintering sites late in March, only a few remaining to early April (latest record 13th). There is generally little sign of northward passage, but in some years concentrations have been noted at the coast early in April.

The Nightingales which occur in central and eastern Kenya may be assigned to either *africana* or *hafizi*. Indeed, apart from birds which remain in Ethiopia (Ash 1973) these eastern races appear to be confined in winter to Kenya and



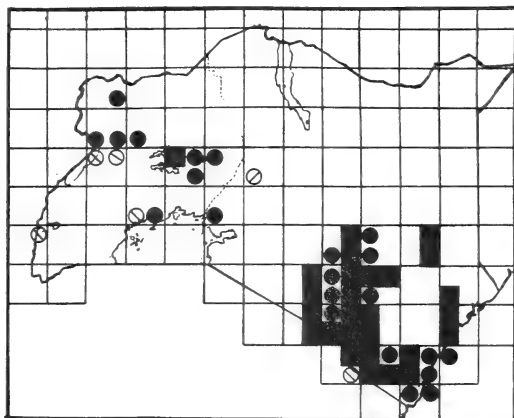


Fig. 1. Recorded distribution of the Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* in Kenya and Uganda

Squares: common to abundant. Ten or more per day likely to be seen in the square in appropriate habitat

Circles: rare to uncommon. Fewer than ten per day likely to be seen

● ■ Recorded 1 Jan to 20 Mar

○ □ Recorded only Sep to Dec (autumn)

◐ ◑ Recorded 21 Mar to May (spring)

◒ ◓ Recorded only in autumn and spring

border regions of north and northeast Tanzania. In birds caught for ringing at Nairobi the ratio of *hafizi* (including *hafizi/africana* intergrades) to *africana* has been less than 1:4 (16 birds examined), whilst at Ngulia it has been much higher (over 2:3; nearly 300 examined), and at the coast *hafizi* predominates.

The Nightingale also winters in Uganda (Fig. 1). It is locally abundant in dry woodland undergrowth at the eastern end of Kyoga (Rolfe & Pearson 1973) and presumably elsewhere around that lake. There are also records along the Nile in the northwest, from Lake Victoria at Entebbe, Kampala and Mpumu and (once) from Lake Edward. With the exception of a *hafizi* near Kampala (Pearson 1972) birds caught for ringing and the few specimens from Uganda have been of the nominate race. Two birds caught in central Nyanza in February were probably also nominate. British Museum (Nat. Hist.) specimens from southern and western Sudan are all nominate birds, and it seems likely that Uganda is the usual southern wintering limit of Nightingale populations from southeast Europe and/or Asia Minor. Certainly most of the birds that occur there are quite distinct from the Asiatic populations wintering in Kenya.

#### SPROSSER *LUSCINIA LUSCINIA*

This species has a more northern and a rather more limited Palaearctic range than the Nightingale, breeding from the southern Baltic, Poland, eastern Czechoslovakia and Romania through the U.S.S.R. between latitudes 45° and 60°N to about 90°E (Vaurie 1959). It migrates entirely through the Middle East to non-breeding quarters confined to eastern Africa. A few birds remain in

Ethiopia and Kenya, but most winter from southern Tanzania and eastern Zambia south to Mozambique, Botswana and the Transvaal (Vaurie 1959). This is mainly a passage migrant in Kenya, again confined to central and southern areas, and, although it has been recorded on migration in southeast Sudan (G. Nikolaus, pers. comm.) there are no traceable records for Uganda.

The first Sprossers arrive in central and southeast Kenya late in October (earliest record 11th), usually before the beginning of the short rains. In lower areas they are usually confined at first to the small patches of green thicket remaining near springs and watercourses. Southward movement occurs east of Lake Turkana, Laikipia and the Aberdares (Fig. 2a). The species is common during November at Marsabit, near the Mathews Range, and at Isiolo, Embu, Thika, Nairobi and Namanga, and there are records at this time from Naro Moru and Naivasha, and more rarely from Nakuru, Baringo and Nyanza. The main migration, however, appears to be concentrated further east, through Meru, Kitui, Machakos and Kibwezi Districts, and Tsavo, passing to the east of Mt Kilimanjaro. Passage is recorded later in these eastern areas. Thus, the heavy movement at Ngulia lasts mainly from early November to mid December, and birds stop over in large numbers in the *Acacia-Commiphora* bushlands only after the vegetation has leafed out, usually from late November to late December. The eastern edge of the migration also seems quite well defined. Thus, there are occasional records east to Garissa, Kalalu Ranch (south of the Galana) and Maungu, but none from the coast and lower Tana valley, or from the northeast.

As a wintering bird, the Sprosser is far less abundant than the Nightingale, and more restricted both geographically and in terms of habitat. It is found locally east of the highlands between 500 and 1500 m, in Meru and Kitui Districts, and from Nairobi and Namanga to Machakos, Kibwezi, Voi and the Taita Hills (Fig. 2a). The species is certainly regular at a few sites but seems to winter in others only in 'green' years with protracted 'short' rains. The thicket habitat favoured by wintering Sprossers is generally moister with more luxuriant herbaceous growth than that typically utilized by the Nightingale. Damp wooded hollows seems to be characteristically preferred, and it is noteworthy that Sprossers are scarce in winter along the larger river courses where Nightingales are common. On passage, Sprossers are found in a variety of more open thicket and scrub situations. Like the Nightingale, the Sprosser is typically sedentary in winter quarters and sings strongly. Similar behaviour is also observed during autumn passage when transit birds commonly establish and occupy territories for up to two or three weeks.

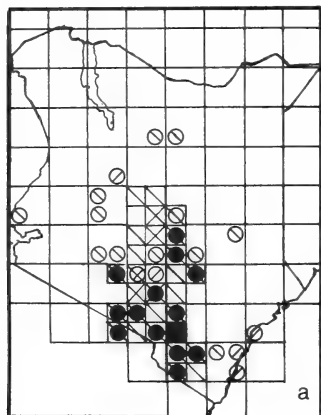
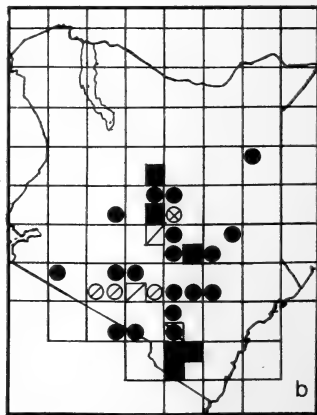


Fig. 2. Distribution of (a) the Sprosser *Luscinia luscinia* and (b) the Irania *Irania gutturalis* in Kenya. Conventions as for Fig. 1



The northward passage of the Sprosser through Kenya is less protracted and generally less noticeable than the autumn one. It occurs mainly during late March and the first half of April, but with occasional records up to 24 April. Birds are noted regularly along the eastern edge of the highlands, and are common in some years on the coast. Occasional large falls at Ngulia and at Mito Andei (Pearson 1980, 1981) have indicated considerable movement across the eastern bushlands, but to judge from the scarcity of spring records from most areas, far more birds must overfly Kenya in spring than in autumn.

### IRANIA IRANIA GUTTURALIS

The Irania has a breeding range restricted to southwest Asia, from Asia Minor, the Caucasus and the eastern Mediterranean to Iran, northern Afghanistan and Soviet Turkestan (Vaurie 1959). It is known only as a passage migrant in Ethiopia and Somalia (Ash 1980, Ash & Miskell 1983), and is unrecorded in Uganda. Its wintering range would seem to be restricted to Kenya and Tanzania. In Tanzania it is known mainly from the northeast and the dry interior, but has recently been seen as far south as Mbeya (J.S.S. Beesley, *in litt.*). In Kenya it winters in plateau country north and east of the highlands, mainly between 300 and 1500 m. It typically frequents low thicket in *Acacia* or *Commiphora* bushland, often along gullies and watercourses or in dry scrub bordering marginal cultivation. Although it usually prefers drier habitats than the *Luscinia* species, it is often found in leafy situations alongside the Nightingale, and seems to avoid the hotter, more arid lowlands. It has been recorded as wintering commonly at Isiolo, north of Mt Ololokwe, in eastern Meru and Kitui Districts, in Tsavo and on the lower slopes of the Taita Hills. There are also January to mid March records from Garissa and Wajir, and to the west from Laikipia, Machakos, Athi River, Nairobi, Namanga and the Mara (Fig. 2b).

The first autumn birds are usually recorded early in November (earliest date 5th). Observations at Ngulia have indicated a considerable and protracted passage from November to early January. Birds are commonly found in and around Tsavo late in December and early in January, presumably on passage stopover, for most move on as the bushlands dry out.

Spring passage birds have been found in several recent years along the eastern edge of the highlands, from the Nyambenis and the Mt Kenya foothills to Nairobi and Kajiado, and also in Tsavo. Most spring records span the period 20 March to 15 April (latest 18 April), and this species usually lingers in Kenya rather longer than the Nightingale.

### DISCUSSION

#### Migration routes

Nightingales and Iranias reaching wintering sites in Kenya in November and December are of southwest Asian origin. Most presumably migrate through central or eastern Ethiopia and cross north or northeast Kenya. Sprossers, on the other hand, are from eastern European as well as western Asian breeding areas. They arrive in November after spending the previous two months mainly in easternmost Sudan and in Ethiopia west of the rift (Ash 1973, 1980, Nikolaus & Pearson 1982, G. Nikolaus pers. comm.), so that immigration appears to be from a direction west of north, perhaps even across the northern end of Lake Turkana. Arrivals of Nightingales and Iranias are probably associated with those of other Asiatic birds such as Red-tailed Shrikes *Lanius isabellinus* and eastern Whitethroats *Sylvia communis icterops*. Sprossers, however, are clearly associated on southward passage with Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris* and River Warblers *Locustella fluviatilis*, which would appear to

follow a similar route, not only through Kenya but through northeast Sudan and Ethiopia (Ash 1980, Nikolaus & Pearson 1982, Nikolaus 1983). Some Sprossers evidently follow a more easterly route across Kenya in spring than in autumn, and in fact the species appears to have a generally more eastern migration through the horn of Africa in spring and is not known in April from the Sudan (G. Nikolaus pers. comm.). A more detailed picture of its occurrence in Ethiopia during the two passage seasons would be valuable.

#### *Interspecific competition*

The species considered here are most likely to be found together at times of migration when a greater variety of habitats is tolerated. All three could well appear, for example, in *Lantana* or other dry scrub, or in semi-arid bush-land. Thus, Nightingales and Sprossers are commonly found together around Nairobi in November, and passage Iranias usually accompany Sprossers during late March and early April. Of the three species, Sprossers prefer the wettest wintering habitat, and Iranias the driest. There is considerable direct interaction and apparent competition between Sprossers and Nightingales where they winter together, but they do tend to segregate, Sprossers occupying sites with ranker undergrowth, sometimes with Nightingales singing from drier thicket within 50 m. The relative preferences of these two species in Kenya are similar to those found in eastern Europe and in Ethiopia (Voous 1960, Ash 1973). Iranias and Nightingales also winter together in Kenya, for example in marginal semi-cultivated country in Kitui District and near the Taita Hills, but it is not clear to what extent they compete with each other.

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(Received 17 February 1984)

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATERS *Puffinus pacificus* OFF RAS NGOMENI, KENYA

At 10:00 on 26 April 1983, we observed two shearwaters at about 500 m range off Ras Ngomeni (2°58'S, 40°30'E), moving south together with terns *Sterna* spp. (mainly Lesser Crested *S. bengalensis*) into a strong southeast wind before an imminent rain squall. They were dark above, and completely so below, including the underwing, but there were light patches on the upper wing covert area. Flight into wind was faster than that of the terns, with a more purposeful wingbeat, low above the waves with frequent changes of tack and only occasional gliding; the wings were long but were angled like those of a tern. The birds were rather larger in wingspan than Lesser Crested Terns, but judged to be smaller than accompanying Crested Terns *S. bergii*. After some 2-3 min they settled on the sea about 300 m out and were lost to view.

About 30 min later bright sunlight provided excellent viewing of birds offshore from a vantage point on coral cliffs about 10 m high. A large-looking shearwater, presumably one of the original two, took off from the sea about 150 m away and directly out, and flew off steadily south. The following points were noted: the flight was fast with steady wingbeats and no gliding; the wings were quite broad but pointed and well angled at the carpal joint; the tail was quite long, projecting well behind; the upperparts were rich dark brown, but with pale markings on the wing coverts and carpals; the underparts and underwing were all dark sooty brown; the bill appeared to be fine and rather long. We identified this bird as a Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus* and presume that the earlier two birds were of this species. The only other all dark Indian Ocean shearwater of this size with a long and relatively thin bill, the Pale-footed Shearwater *P. carneipes*, has a heavier, stiff-winged flight with much interspersed gliding, narrow wings and a short tail (Tuck 1978, Harrison 1983). Indeed, no other all dark medium sized petrel or shearwater has the same combination of thin bill and long projecting tail.

There are other recent sightings of shearwaters off the Kenya coast which were thought to have been Wedge-tailed, as follows: Watamu, January 1974; Kilifi, December 1977; Ras Ngomeni, October 1980; Shimoni, September 1982. However, the observations described here would seem to represent the first fully substantiated records of this Seychelles breeding species from East Africa.

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Scopus 8: 24, March 1984

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SHOEBILL *Balaeniceps rex* AND WATTLED CRANE *Grus carunculatus*  
IN THE MOYOWOSI SWAMP, TANZANIA

In August and September 1971 I flew extensively about the Moyowosi swamp in western Tanzania (4°50'S, 31°24'E). Much of the flying was carried out at very low levels (<10 m above ground) which permitted many birds to be seen and identified. In the course of the flying two species were seen repeatedly. Wattled Cranes *Grus carunculatus* were seen in pairs and small groups of up to

six individuals in a number of locations along the swamp's northwestern edge, particularly where these formed intrusions into the surrounding *Brachystegia* woodland. D. McCallum (pers. comm.), a hunter who knew the area well and who had photographed these cranes in the Moyowosi, confirmed that they had been seen whenever he had visited the area in previous years. There is therefore a suggestion that the species occupies this area permanently.

Shoebills *Balaeniceps rex* were seen frequently over a large area running down the southeastern side of the Moyowosi swamps. Normally this species is somewhat cryptic from the ground, standing still amongst aquatic sedges and reeds. However, the low passage of the aircraft in the immediate vicinity of a Shoebill caused alarm - the bird either crouching with outspread wings or taking flight. Using these reactions I counted all Shoebills within 50 m of my flight paths and was able to produce a crude estimate of densities. This was 0.64 Shoebills/km<sup>2</sup> of suitable habitat. The extent of suitable habitat was estimated to be of the order of 200 km<sup>2</sup> and thus the area might have held a population of more than 300 of these birds. While the crudeness of the estimate calls for caution in any use made of it, it does suggest that Brown et al. (1982) were unduly pessimistic in their suggestion that the continental population might be as low as 1500. Being familiar with the species on Lake Bangweulu, Zambia, Lake Kioga, Uganda, and along the Albert Nile, also in Uganda, it was not my impression that the Shoebills on the Moyowosi were particularly numerous. An impression of scarcity probably derives from the general inaccessibility of the species' habitat. In the few areas where it can be searched from a boat or from a vehicle, the habitat is usually a thin ribbon along the water's edge. In such circumstances the bird's scarcity is not surprising. Where the habitat is extensive, in the shallows between dry land and papyrus banks, it is difficult to search from either boats or wheeled vehicles.

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THE SWALLOW-TAILED KITE *CHELICTINIA RIOCOURII* BREEDING  
IN THE KEDONG VALLEY, KENYA

In a recent note, Sutton et al. (1984) gave brief details of the first confirmed breeding record of the Swallow-tailed Kite *Chelictinia riocourii* in the Kedong valley, some 60 km northwest of Nairobi (1°03'S, 36°25'E), Kenya.

Following a subsequent visit to the nest site on 23 October 1983, further information can be given. As previously noted (Sutton et al. 1984), the nest was built in a *Balanites* tree about 3 m above ground level and about 1 m beneath the nest of a Secretary Bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*. Three young Swallow-tailed Kites were seen: two were well able to fly while the third was obviously less advanced.

Based on estimates of the incubation and fledging periods (Brown et al. 1982), the eggs must have been laid during the second half of August, when the Secretary Bird was still occupying the nest above. This association with other raptors while nesting is known in this species (Brown et al. 1982). The recorded breeding range of the Swallow-tailed Kite is in the northern tropics during the April/May rains (Brown & Britton 1980); these Kedong birds were thus breeding some two to three months later at 1°S, the southern limit of their known breeding range.

As previously noted (Sutton et al. 1984), the nest was very white, contrasting with the green of the *Balanites* tree. The young birds' rather mucilag-

inous droppings fell vertically, thus whitening the nest material, a habit more typical of the Falconidae rather than of the Accipitridae (Brown & Amadon 1968), which generally eject their excreta clear of the nest.

Both adults brought food to the young and during the mid morning period one chick was fed seven times during 105 min, another five times in 60 min and the third seven times in 80 min. All prey items seen delivered to the young were lizards, however, it was not possible from the distance to determine to what family they belonged. Each young bird was thus fed once every 11 to 15 min. The adults hunted within about 2 km of the nest tree, and prey was caught either by a dive from harrier (*Circus*)-like quartering, or by plunging to earth from a hover. Not every attempt was successful.

Two days later (25 October) the adults were seen passing food directly to the young in mid air, while doing so both young and adult tumbled earthwards (R. Campbell and B. Davidson, pers. comm.).

Although the chicks called from time to time in the absence of the adult birds, they became very vocal when the adults were seen, uttering high-pitched 'chirruping' calls and exposing their red gapes. On two occasions, one of the adults uttered a melodious 'chattering' call as it left the nest, but otherwise they were silent.

Some pellets were found beneath the nest, but many of them had been broken up by beetles (Coleoptera: Trogidae) which were feeding on their organic content. Identified remains from the pellets included Orthoptera, Hymenoptera (Formicidae), some Coleoptera, two separate chelicerae of a solifuge (Arachnida: Solifugae) as well as lizard jaw bones and vertebrae. Two of the pellets, which were rough in texture, measured 22 x 13 mm and 23 x 15 mm.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are grateful to R.G. Allan for his comments.

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- C.F. Dewhurst and L.D.C. Fishpool, Box 30023, Nairobi Received 4 January 1984
- Scopus* 8: 25-26, March 1984

#### A ROOST OF LESSER KESTRELS *FALCO NAUMANNI* ON THE ATHI PLAINS, KENYA

Smalley (1983) describes a roost of Lesser Kestrels observed in Nairobi National Park during March and April 1983, and states that large assemblies of this species have not been recorded in the area for many years. This roost was not an isolated occurrence, however, as on 9 and 10 April 1983 C.A. Taylor and I observed a large roost of Lesser Kestrels in tall acacia trees in a valley on the Athi Plains near Kajiaado at 1.46S, 36.46E. The roost contained at least 2500 Lesser Kestrels and 35 Eastern Red-footed Falcons *Falco amurensis*.

Birds were seen to approach the roost from all directions but the majority came from the west and southwest; they continued to arrive at the roost until darkness fell. The only other Palaearctic falcon seen in the vicinity of the roost was a single Hobby *F. subbuteo* on 9 April.

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P.B. Taylor, Box 25138, Nairobi

Received 7 November 1983

*Scopus* 8: 26, March 1984



WHITE-FACED SCOPS OWL *OTUS LEUCOTIS* BREEDING AT MAKERERE, UGANDA

Between 7 and 9 February 1984, two young White-faced Scops Owls were found in a clump of trees at Makerere University, about 4 km from the centre of Kampala. They were brought to the Department of Zoology, where one was kept for a few days by JG, but unfortunately it died, apparently of pneumonia. The other was returned to the place where it had been found. The dead bird was skinned and its identity checked by comparison with skins in the National Museum, Nairobi.

The birds had presumably left the nest, although their flight feathers were still sheathed at their bases, and the tail was only about half-grown. Both had bright orange-red eyes and ( )-shaped black marks at the edge of the face, which had already developed white feathers. (The 'horns', however, had not grown out.) Brown & Britton (1980) list only one confirmed breeding record for East Africa, and the only previous Ugandan records are from the north and east (Britton 1980). A search was made for the nest in the tall old trees where the young had been found, but it was not seen, neither did evening visits lead to the discovery of the parent birds. However, we feel certain that the nest was there; the people who brought the birds showed us where they had been found. There is no reason to believe that the birds had been brought from afar in the hope of financial reward.

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*Scopus* 8: 27, March 1984

## NOTES ON THE RANGES OF THREE SPECIES IN NORTHERN AND EASTERN KENYA

The following extensions or clarifications of range have been revealed by researches associated with the Kenya bird atlas scheme (Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.), and supplement information given in Britton (1980) and other sources.

*Star-spotted Nightjar Caprimulgus stellatus*

Britton (1980) describes this species as a rare inhabitant of the arid areas of northern Kenya and lists localities that are mostly north of 2°N; he also notes its occurrence on the northern edge of the central Kenya highlands at the Lekundu River (0°29'N, 37°39'E) and at Kongeli (1°28'N, 35°01'E).

The following records, all of single birds unless otherwise stated and all supported by the examination of corpses, are from the area between Kongeli and the Lekundu River, and suggest that the species may be more frequent there than hitherto thought.

July 1968, Lokori (1°57'N, 36°01'E), National Museum collection

17 June 1970, Lokori; 2, including a male in breeding condition, National  
Museum collection

25 June 1970, Lokori, National Museum collection

24 October 1980, Colcheccio (0°36'N, 36°49'E), road kill, J.M.S. & R. Cald-  
well in litt.)

20 January 1982, Kapedo (1°10'N, 36°06'E), road kill, T Stevenson (pers.  
comm.)

6 August 1982, El Karama Ranch (0°08'N, 36°54'E), killed by domestic cat  
L.V.J. Grant in litt.)

Mrs Grant also has a sight record of two further individuals of this species at El Karama Ranch on 7 September 1982. The El Karama records are the southernmost of this species for Kenya and, just to the northwest of Nanyuki, demonstrate its occurrence south to the northern edge of the highlands.

White-headed Mousebird *Colius leucocephalus*

Records of this species from Garissa (0°27'S, 39°39'E) represent a new locality for Kenya and are of interest because this area is approximately midway between the known ranges of *C. l. turneri* in northern Kenya and the nominate race along the lower Tana River. These occurrences, recorded by R. and L.M. Greenham (in litt.), were seasonal: 15 December 1974; 23 January, 15 November and 20 December 1975 and 29 December 1976.

Brown-breasted Barbet *Lybius melanopterus*

Britton (1980) described this species as common along the Tana River, upstream to Garissa. An adult was seen perched on the topmost exposed twigs of tall riverine trees opposite Samburu Lodge (0°35'N, 37°32'E) on 10 December 1977 (E. Muller and ADL) thus representing an extension of range of approximately 265 km to the northwest. The bird had presumably wandered northwestwards along the Tana, Ewaso Ng'iro and associated river systems. This record certainly represents a vagrant from the species' normal range since there is no subsequent record of this conspicuous bird on the numerous lists from this frequently visited locality contributed to the Kenya bird atlas scheme.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to the observers for the use of their unpublished records and for their support of the atlas project generally; my thanks also to G.R. Cunningham-van Someren for the use of the study collection at the National Museum, Nairobi.

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Adrian D. Lewis, Department of Geology, University of Nairobi, Box 30197,  
Nairobi

Received 15 August 1983

*Scopus* 8: 27-28, March 1984

RECENT KENYA RECORDS OF CLARKE'S WEAVER *PLOCEUS GOLANDI*  
AND AN INDICATION OF ITS BREEDING SEASON

Clarke's Weaver *Ploceus golandi* is a Kenya endemic at present known only from coastal areas between Kilifi Creek and the Sabaki River, in and around Sokoke Forest, and its nesting sites are unknown (Britton 1980). It is apparently seasonal in occurrence, Britton & Zimmerman (1979) stating that it is seldom recorded outside the period August to October, while Britton (1980) states that it is most frequent in August and September and that it is either absent or overlooked for months at a time.

The East African Bird Reports (*Scopus* 1977-1983) give the following additional information on recent occurrences in Sokoke Forest:

- 1976: 20 on 7 December
- 1977: regular August to October
- 1978: about 25 on 3 April; large flocks of mostly immatures reappeared from 16 August and remained through September and October, last seen on 10 November
- 1979: a pair "possibly nesting nearby" on 18 April; present August and 20 November
- 1980: 15 netted 6 July; a few 25 November
- 1981: small numbers August and early November
- 1982: about 100 15 April; 30+ 23 September.

The period of regular occurrence has thus been extended to August to November

with records also for July and December, while the April occurrences suggest that this species may also be present, but overlooked, in May and June.

In addition to these records, there is another April record as follows: on 4 April 1982 the author observed two flocks of *P. golandi* in the canopy of *Brachystegia* at Sokoce, one flock of 30 and one of 60 birds. The birds were very noisy, constantly uttering chattering and chirping calls, and not only were adults of both sexes present, but also juveniles which, in some cases were closely accompanying adult females. The juvenile plumage of this species is apparently not described in the literature, and brief field notes taken at the time of observation record that the juveniles were dull greenish above, hardly streaked, and washed with dull yellowish below. The wing pattern was not noted. Some of the juveniles were seen to beg for food from females, and at least one was fed by its accompanying female on several occasions.

The behaviour of the juveniles indicated recent breeding, and this is of interest because there is very little information on the possible breeding season of this weaver. Apart from the pair seen in Sokoce in April 1979 which were thought to be possibly nesting locally, there is only the record of flocks of predominantly immatures reappearing from August in 1978. It is not possible to calculate accurately the period in which the 1982 juveniles were bred, but an estimate may be made on the basis of the available information for other *Ploceus* species (E.A.N.H.S. Nest Record Scheme data and personal observations). A study of the Golden Palm Weaver *P. bojeri* at Mombasa in 1981 (P.B. Taylor in prep.) gave approximate periods of incubation and nestling stages of 13 and 16-17 d respectively. Assuming that the equivalent periods for *P. golandi* are not greatly different, the time from laying to fledging should not be more than about 30 d.

Hardly any information is available on the period of post-fledging dependence, but on E.A.N.H.S. nest record cards completed by Mrs F. Ng'weno for Baglafaecht Weaver *P. baglafaecht* the period of dependence is estimated to be 35 to 42 d (four broods). It may therefore be estimated that the still-dependent young of the *P. golandi* were not more than five weeks out of the nest (and presumably not less than one week, as they could fly well). Laying therefore probably took place from five to nine weeks before the date of observation, i.e. in February.

It is possible that free-flying but dependent young could accompany adults on at least local movements, so the April 1982 record does not necessarily indicate breeding in Sokoce Forest, and the birds could have travelled some distance from their breeding grounds. Indeed, the possible breeding month of February makes it unlikely that breeding took place either at Sokoce Forest or elsewhere on the Kenya coast: Brown & Britton (1980) give no February or March breeding records for any *Ploceus* species in their coastal Region E, and state that ploceids at the coast tend to breed in the main rains with a late rains peak in August. Moreover, the only coastal East African breeding record for a forest weaver is for the Dark-backed *P. bicolor* in April 1921 (E.A.N.H.S. Nest Record Scheme). The complete lack of records of *P. golandi* from Sokoce Forest in January to March also suggests that the birds may be absent from the area at this time, but they could conceivably be present and breeding in inaccessible areas. However, there is no definite evidence to suggest that *P. golandi* breeds either at the Kenya coast or in forest, and the possibility of medium- to long-distance movements to and from breeding areas cannot be discounted.

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SOME SPECIMEN RECORDS FROM THE RUVUMA RIVER, FRONTIER OF  
MOZAMBIQUE AND TANZANIA

Northern Mozambique is one of the ornithologically least known areas of Africa (Hall & Moreau 1970, Snow 1978) and one in which I have some interest (cf. Brooke 1969). Through the courtesy in December 1972 of Mr C. Jacot-Guillarmod, then Director of the Albany Museum, Grahamstown, South Africa, I was able to examine a small collection made by W.O. Harvey in the Southern Province of Tanzania between 1935 and 1937. Some of his specimens were taken on the Mikindani and Tunduru sectors of the Ruvuma River whose middle and lower reaches form the frontier between Tanzania and Mozambique and thus they can be regarded as as much Mozambican as Tanzanian records. These specimens are now listed.

*Porphyrio porphyrio* Purple Gallinule male, Mikindani sector, 15 October 1935.

*P. alleni* Allen's Gallinule male, Mikindani sector, 15 October 1935.

*Actophilornis africanus* Jacana male, Mikindani sector, 15 October 1935.

*Actitis hypoleucos* Common Sandpiper unsexed, Mikindani sector, 13 October 1935.

*Glareola nuchalis* White-collared Pratincole unsexed, Tunduru sector, no date. The lack of a date on this specimen is a pity since, at least to the south, the species is known to be a migrant (Benson & Irwin 1965). However, it may well have been taken in November, a probable month in terms of southern conditions, along with the next two species. The most southerly record in Britton (1980) is from the Selous Game Reserve, southern Tanzania.

*Rynchops flavirostris* African Skimmer male and female, Tunduru sector, November 1936.

*Ceryle maxima* Giant Kingfisher male, Tunduru sector, November 1936. This is a newly fledged bird with white axillaries and measures wing 192 mm, tail 114 mm, exposed culmen 72 mm, all below the minimum measurements for adults given in Reichenow (1903), viz. 195, 120 and 85 mm respectively.

*Alcedo semitorquata* Half-collared Kingfisher unsexed, Tunduru sector, no date, perhaps November 1936.

*Halcyon albiventris* Brown-hooded Kingfisher male, Mikindani sector, 18 October 1935.

*Campethera cailliautii* Little Spotted Woodpecker male, Mikindani sector, 13 October 1935. This is the only species mentioned in this contribution which is recorded by Frade (1953) for extreme northern Mozambique.

*Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* Violet-backed Starling male, Tunduru sector, no date, perhaps November 1936.

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- R.K. Brooke, *Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, 7700 South Africa*
- Received 17 February 1984
- Scopus* 8: 30, March 1984

## BIRDS AT ANT SWARMS IN KENYA AND SOUTHERN SUDAN

Although there is much literature concerning birds associating with army ants (tribe Ecitonini) in the Neotropical region (see Willis & Oniki 1978 for a review), there appears to be little published relating to this behaviour in the Afrotropical region.

While bird-watching in Lotti Forest (southern Sudan), Kakamega Forest (western Kenya), and in coral-rag forest at Gedi Ruins (coastal Kenya), I was able to watch 12 species of birds at driver ant (tribe Dorylini) swarms. Altogether ant swarms were observed on six occasions, and each time a number of birds of several species were seen to be foraging in association with the swarm. All ant swarms were observed for a minimum period of 30 min.

Due to the dense understorey at Lotti and Kakamega, it cannot be certain that all individual birds at the swarms were detected. At the same time, it was difficult to assess the area covered by the ant swarms at every location, but all were at least 5 m long in one dimension. Table 1 documents all the sightings of birds observed foraging at ant swarms which were considered to be associating with the ants and benefitting from doing so.

TABLE 1

Birds recorded at ant swarms. Ant swarms located as follows: S=Lotti Forest, K=Kakamega Forest (four separate swarms), G=Gedi Ruins. Numbers in brackets indicate the number of individuals present at the swarm. Empty brackets indicate that the species was present at the locality, but absent from the swarm. Dashes indicate that the species was absent from the locality. Species only seen briefly are excluded

Species	Swarm (number of individual birds)					
	S	K1	K2	K3	K4	G
Grey-chested Illadopsis						
<i>Kakamega poliothorax</i>	-	( )	( )	(2)	( )	-
Scaly Babbler						
<i>Turdoides squamulatus</i>	-	-	-	-	-	(4)
Yellow-whiskered Greenbul						
<i>Andropadus latirostris</i>	( )	(1)	( )	( )	( )	-
Bristlebill						
<i>Bleda syndactyla</i>	(1-2)	(2)	(1)	( )	( )	-
Nicator						
<i>Nicator chloris</i>	( )	-	-	-	-	(1)
Brownbul						
<i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>	-	-	-	-	-	(1-2)
Brown-chested Alethe						
<i>Alethe poliocephala</i>	(1)	(3)	(4-5)	(1)	(3)	-
Blue-shouldered Robin Chat						
<i>Cossypha cyanocampter</i>	( )	( )	( )	(1)	( )	-
Red-capped Robin Chat						
<i>Cossypha natalensis</i>	(1-2)	-	-	-	-	(3)
White-tailed Ant Thrush						
<i>Neocossyphus poensis</i>	-	( )	(1)	( )	(2)	-
Black-faced Rufous Warbler						
<i>Bathmocercus cerviniventris</i>	-	(1)	( )	( )	( )	-
Dusky Crested Flycatcher						
<i>Trochocercus nigromitratus</i>	-	( )	(1)	( )	( )	-

All these individuals were feeding amongst vegetation swarming with ants, or on the ground among the ants. However, only three species (*Kakamega poliothorax*, *Alethe poliocephala* and *Neocossyphus poensis*) were observed hopping amongst high densities of ants. Other species either sat in vegetation just above the ants and regularly darted into the area below to capture prey items (*Andropadus latirostris*, *Nicator chloris*, *Phyllastrephus terrestris*, *Cossypha cyanocampter*, *Bathmocercus cerviniventris* and *Trochocercus nigromitratus*), or darted into the swarm area from low vegetation or the ground adjacent to the ant swarm (*Bleda syndactyla* and *Cossypha natalensis*). The *Turdoides squamulatus* fed on the ground, at times hopping among low densities of ants, but usually keeping to the swarm's edge.

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*Scopus* 8: 31-32, March 1984

## NOTICES

### EAST AFRICAN RARITIES COMMITTEE

The East African Rarities Committee is in the process of being set up as a body distinct from the Ornithological Sub-Committee to deal with records of rare birds from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It will have ten members of which six will be based in East Africa, and four outside, and it will seek advice from non-members with knowledge of certain species when necessary. The East African Rarities Committee may well wish to formulate its own criteria for the acceptance of records, but they are likely to be essentially the same as those set out in the most recent East African Bird Report (*Scopus* 6: 128).

When *Scopus* began in 1977, one of its aims was to be the main vehicle for the publication of distributional data from the three East African countries. This aim has been realized, aided by the appearance in 1980 of *Birds of East Africa*, and will be encouraged in the future. *Scopus* will rely on the judgement, expertise and impartiality of the new Committee in scrutinizing records of rare birds before it publishes them.

The names of the members of the East African Rarities Committee will be published in the June 1984 *Scopus* and in other journals which have sometimes published East African records.

### RAPTOR COLLISIONS WITH UTILITY LINES

#### A call for information

The United States Bureau of Land Management, Sacramento, in co-operation with the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, is assembling all available published and unpublished information concerning collisions of raptors with power lines and other utility lines. Actual case histories - no matter how circumstantial or fragmentary - are needed. Please acknowledge that you have such information by writing to Dr Richard R. (Butch) Olendorff, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825, U.S.A. A form on which to record your information will then be sent by return mail.

Continued from inside front cover

in the case of books, the town of publication and the publisher should be given. A number of works, which are cited frequently, should not be listed under 'References'; the name(s) of the author(s) and date(s) of publication should be given in the text in the normal way.

All contributions, which will be acknowledged, should be sent to the Editor, G.C. Backhurst, Box 24702, Nairobi, Kenya.

#### WORKS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE LISTED UNDER 'REFERENCES'

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#### EAST AFRICAN BIRD REPORT

This forms the fifth issue of *Scopus* and each report covers one calendar year. Records of Afrotropical Region (i.e. Ethiopian Region and Malagasy Sub-Region) and Oceanic birds should be sent to D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi; records of Palaearctic Region birds to Dr D.J. Pearson, Department of Biochemistry, Box 30197, Nairobi. Records should be sent in early in the new year to ensure the speedy production of the Bird Report. Reports of rare birds may be telephoned through to any OS-C member (numbers inside front cover) in the hope that the bird(s) may be seen by others. Criteria covering the submission of Bird Report records are given in *Scopus* Supplement, June 1982, copies of which are available from D.A. Turner.

#### BIRDS OF EAST AFRICA

Copies of this 270-page book are available from the Secretary, EANH, Box 44486, Nairobi for £8.00 or US\$17.00 surface mail to anywhere in the world.

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Enclosed with this issue is a leaflet and order form for  
*Scopus* Special Supplement Number 1, *BIRDS OF SOMALIA* their  
habitat, status and distribution by J.S. Ash & J.E. Miskell



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# ***SCOPUS***

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# SCOPUS

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Contributions should be typed in 1½ or double spacing on one side of the paper only, with wide margins all round, and should be submitted in duplicate. Exceptionally, clear hand-written MSS will be considered but these too should be sent in duplicate. Both English and scientific names of birds should be given when the species is first mentioned, thereafter only one should be used. English and scientific names should be those of *Birds of East Africa* unless the species does not occur in that work.

Tables, which should be numbered, *should appear in the typescript, NOT grouped on separate sheets at the end*. Metric units should be used.

Illustrations should be on good quality white paper, bristol board or tracing material, in line, and should not be larger than 19 x 23 cm. Lettering (in black) will be the responsibility of the author and should be done neatly in Letraset (or similar), no larger than 14 point (3.9 mm). Each illustration should be numbered (Fig. 1, etc.) and be provided with a legend typed on a separate sheet of paper. Photographs will also be considered.

Any references cited should be listed at the end of the contribution following the form used in this issue. Names of periodicals *MUST* be given in full and,

*Continued inside back cover*

# SCOPUS

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

### THE AFRICAN BIRD COLLECTIONS OF S.A. WHITE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mathews (1910), Chisholm, Condon and Whittell (all 1954) mention that the Australian naturalist and ornithologist, Samuel Albert White, born 20 December 1870, died 19 January 1954, collected birds in central and eastern Africa and that he served in South Africa in the Imperial Forces as a captain during the second Anglo-Boer War. His African bird work did not give rise to any publications. His surviving African bird specimens, some 408 skins of 143 species, were presented to the South Australian Museum, Adelaide, by his widow, Muriel, in 1976. This collection has been studied and it is now possible to elucidate his African work in the light of his surviving material and the letters he wrote to his cousin, the ornithologist J.W. Mellor. The places and dates where he collected birds are given in Table 1. Place names have been modernized where necessary. We do not list all the species collected since most of them are well known from the areas he visited but only those that are worthy of note for one reason or another.

The collection was relabelled at some stage and, unfortunately, a few specimens had the wrong labels attached to them, e.g. the Eastern Bearded Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas quadrivirgata* and Tropical Boubou *Laniarius ferrugineus* (*aethiopicus*) are labelled as from the east side of Table Mountain (Kirstenbosch), Cape Town, in July 1901 whereas they were obtained in eastern Africa in August or September 1903: these forms do not occur anywhere near Cape Town. However, this was an occasional error and there is no reason to doubt that virtually all specimens are correctly labelled. Lists of his African material are held by the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology and by the East London Museum.

#### SOUTH AFRICA

White joined the South Australian Imperial Bushmen as a lieutenant and distinguished himself on 6 June 1901 in the affair at Graspan near Reitz in the Orange Free State (Wallace 1976). Presumably it was just after this that he was promoted to captain for, while his unit continued to fight its way northward through the O.F.S. into the Transvaal, he went to Cape Town and collected his first birds there on 19 July (Table 1). He collected birds in the Districts of Cape Town, Wynberg and Stellenbosch till 12 August while waiting to go to Colesberg as Administrator of No. 12 Area. As may be seen from Table 1 he obtained his first birds in the Colesberg District on 17 August so the train journey from Cape Town to Colesberg must have been made between 12 and 17 Aug-

TABLE 1  
S.A. White's African collecting localities in date order

Locality	°/S	°/E	Dates
E side of Table Mt			
= Kirstenbosch	33.59	18.25	19-29 July 1901
Eastbrooke, ? = Rondebosch	33.58	18.28	19 July 1901
Muldersvlei	33.50	18.49	31 July
Plumstead	34.02	18.28	2 August
Elsenberg	33.50	18.50	12 August
Colesberg	30.46	25.05	17 August 1901 - 5 June 1902
Agtertang Siding	30.42	25.18	17 August and 21 September
Palmietfontein	30.47	25.08	11 September - 11 October
Raasfontein	30.51	25.15	27 September and 1 November
Rensberg Siding	30.50	25.05	3 - 13 October
Joubert Siding	30.42	25.12	4 October
Longwood	30.47	24.55	6 October
Buffelsvlei	30.40	25.09	8 October
13 miles E of Hanover	31.00	24.26	19 October
Sea Cow R. = Seekoeirivier, probably where the main road crosses it at	30.20	25.00	25 - 29 October
Rietfontein	30.41	25.43	31 October - 12 November
Wagon bridge at the Orange R., ? = Bothasdrif	30.30	25.11	13 November
Hall R. = Holle R.	30.46	25.16	22 November 1901 - 21 July 1902
Kraai R. Bridge = Kraaibrug	30.47	26.51	27 April - 27 July
North bank of the Orange R. near Aliwal North	30.42	26.42	6 and 20 June
Stormfontein, ? = Lekker- draai Siding	30.50	20.24	15 - 21 July
Klipkrans	30.50	25.32	18 July
30 miles east of Colesberg = Venterstad	30.47	25.47	18 July
Franschhoek	33.55	19.07	14 - 19 September
Pemba Bay = Porto Amelia	12.57	40.30	9 and 10 August 1903
100 miles west of Pemba Bay, ? = Montepuez	13.13	39.00	(? 13 August)
Dunga, Zanzibar Island	6.09	34.20	18 - 25 August
Lamu Island	2.27	40.54	31 August - 8 September

ust. He collected birds intermittently in every month of his stay there until June 1902. In 1902 his duties took him eastwards into the Venterstad, Albert and Aliwal North Districts and even just across the Orange River into the Rouxville District of the O.F.S. where he obtained a few birds in June. No birds were obtained in August but he spent some days in September collecting at Franschhoek in the Paarl District of the southwestern Cape, presumably while on leave before embarkation for Australia. In all, 312 specimens of 94 species from South Africa survive.

#### EAST AFRICA

Like so many other visitors to Africa he was fascinated by it and determined to return to collect birds, insects, plants and big game trophies. He returned to Cape Town on 30 June 1903. By 2 August he was at sea between Maputo and Beira. He stopped at Pemba Bay in which lies Porto Amelia, capital of Cabo

Delgado, the ornithologically least known province of Mozambique. On 9 and 10 August he obtained there the Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos*, Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus*, Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*, Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*, Eastern Nicator *Nicator gularis*, Collared Sunbird *Antheptes collaris*, White-bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia talatala*, Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*, Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*, Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata* and Brimstone Canary *Serinus sulphuratus*. None of these species is recorded from Porto Amelia by Frade (1953a, b) though *M. pusillus* and *L. cucullata* are recorded from elsewhere in the Province by Frade (1953a) and *U. indicus* and *P. griseus* likewise by Frade (1953b). At Pemba Bay White met the Duke de Fruas who had just returned from a safari to Lake Malawi. They travelled together for three days (about 160 km) back towards the lake, and White obtained the Brown-breasted Barbet *Lybius melanopterus*, *A. collaris*, Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus angolensis* and *E. astrild* where they camped near Montepuez before returning to the coast. None of these four species is recorded by Frade (1953a, b) for the Cabo Delgado Province.

By 18 August White was collecting birds on Zanzibar Island, mostly at Dunga, and continued to do so until 25 August by which time he had obtained over 100 specimens of which just over 30 survive. Most of his surviving material is of species now well known from the island but he obtained a pair of Little Bitterns *Ixobrychus minutus payesii* on 25 August, a male Lesser Spotted (= Bailon's) Crake *Porzana pusilla obscura*<sup>1</sup> on 21 August and a female Madagascar Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*. *Porzana pusilla* is not recorded from Zanzibar, and the other two species are rare there (Pakenham 1979).

White also obtained specimens on Zanzibar of the African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis* of which four survive. Pakenham (*op. cit.*) discusses the forms occurring in Zanzibar without coming to a firm conclusion. The three adult and subadult specimens before us are *T. v. plumbeiceps sensu* Meise (1968) with grey throats: two have darker grey crowns and one has a somewhat iridescent dark blue crown. The fourth specimen is a fledgling taken on 20 August and on its label White has noted "shot a long tailed male feeding this bird". The two adults are males taken on 20 August and both have their long tail feathers shot off. One of them is presumably the parent of the fledgling. The fledgling specimen is a poor one but there is nothing about it to suggest that it is subspecifically different from the others. This is the first breeding record for Zanzibar (Pakenham 1979). It would seem that the type of *T. v. ungujaensis* Grant & Mackworth-Praed 1947 taken on Zanzibar Island in 1877 was a non-breeding visitor from the mainland and that the island does not form part of its breeding range. The alternative would be two species, a problem which we are unable to go into here but which seems very unlikely on a relatively small island.

White then visited Lamu Island on the coast of Kenya and collected birds between 31 August and 8 September but obtained no species that need be mentioned here. He also used Lamu as a base to visit various places on the mainland. He may well have collected insects or plants on these trips, or even sought a shot at a game trophy but there is no evidence that he collected birds unless those merely labelled 'Africa' came from this portion of his trip. He left Lamu on or after 21 September for Cape Town where he took ship for Australia. His last sight of Africa was at Durban which he left on 19 October 1903.

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<sup>1</sup>Britton (1980), following White (1965), does not recognize *obscura* as distinct from the race *intermedia*.

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- Scopus* 8: 33-36, June 1984

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#### DISTINCT STATUS CHANGES OF CERTAIN PALAEARCTIC MIGRANTS IN THE SUDAN

A large number of Palearctic species visit the Sudan on passage or during the northern winter and a few overwinter. While most of these originate from eastern Europe and Asia, there are some of which the whole Eurasian breeding population visits the country.

Comparing the records before 1955 (Butler 1905, 1908, Bowen 1926, 1931, Cave & Macdonald 1955) with those after that year (A. Pettet in litt., G. Nikolaus from 1976 to 1983 pers. obs) it is clear that drastic changes have taken place in the status of some species, which form the subject of this note.

##### Waldrapp *Geronticus eremita*

Cave & Macdonald (1955) state that the Waldrapp (or Bald Ibis) is "Rare although recorded as occurring in flocks of several hundreds", while Bowen (1926) also states it to be "common on the coast - resident" even though breeding has never been mentioned for this region. There are at least five skins in the Khartoum Natural History Museum (KNHM) from the Red Sea coast for years before 1940.

After 1955 there is only one sight record (GN, pers. obs.) of a single bird on presumed spring passage on 18 March 1983 near Suakin (19.05N, 37.20E). This decline in numbers conforms with the recent reduction in the known eastern Mediterranean breeding population (Brown et al. 1982, Cramp & Simmons 1977), from which birds recorded in the Sudan are likely to have come.

##### Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*

Bowen (1926) and Cave & Macdonald (1955) regarded this species as a common

non-breeding visitor to the Nile north of Khartoum between October and March. Most observers before 1955 report it as regular in small numbers in the north-eastern part of the Sudan during winter, even south to about Tendelti (13.01N, 31.52E). There are no post-1955 records. Brown et al. (1982) record its decline as a breeding species in many regions of the Palaearctic although it is interesting to note that it has been found breeding in Ethiopia in 1975 and 1976 (Ash 1977).

*Egyptian Vulture Neophron percnopterus*

This species has a major breeding population in northern Sudan and it is not known to what extent the numbers are augmented by Palaearctic visitors.

It is still locally very common, especially along the Red Sea coast from late September to spring. But in some places, such as Khartoum (15.35N, 32.30E) and Wad Medani (14.23N, 33.32E), where numbers up to a few thousands were reported in the past, the Egyptian Vulture is now a rare bird. Around Khartoum all other species of vulture have totally disappeared. The reasons for these changes are not clear, but the biggest numbers are probably victims of the electric powerlines, where they are killed when they touch the wires while roosting on the poles (Nikolaus, G. 1984: *Scopus* 8: 42).

Another reason for the decline could be the very intensive use of pesticides and herbicides around Khartoum and in Gesira Province, while quite a number are regularly killed along the new Khartoum - Wad Medani - Port Sudan road. However, since this road is only a few years old it cannot be a major reason for the decline of the population.

*Sociable Plover Vanellus gregarius*

It has always been only a rare winter visitor to northern Sudan and is less common than the White-tailed Plover *V. leucurus*, which is more tied to aquatic habitats than the Sociable Plover, even though both are represented by 12 skins in the KNHM. The most recent Sociable Plovers to have been collected in the Sudan were in 1950, and there are no records since.

We cannot explain the change of status of this species; it would be useful to know if there has been a similar decline in northern Ethiopia. In Somalia there is only one old record from the north of the country (Ash & Miskell (1983)).

*Black-headed Gull Larus ridibundus*

In contrast to all the other species mentioned in this note, the Black-headed Gull became much more common in recent years. In winter up to 3000 were counted at the Jebel Aulia dam (15.15N, 32.28E) and large numbers are seen regularly elsewhere along the Nile, south to Lake No (9.30N, 30.30E). Further south, and away from the Nile, only single birds, mainly in immature plumage, occur. Britton (1980) records a similar increase from Kenya and Tanzania. In the past in the Sudan Cave & Macdonald (1955) and Bowen (1926) gave the status of the Black-headed Gull as an uncommon non-breeding visitor.

The status change is probably related to the strong increase in its European breeding population, but since there are still no ringing recoveries, the precise origin of Sudan birds is unknown.

*Spanish Sparrow Passer hispaniolensis*

This species is known for its sporadic occurrence in Africa in winter. Around 1920 it was reported in Dongola Province (c. 19.20N, 30.30E) in such numbers that major control campaigns were necessary to ensure no disruption in agriculture (King 1921). Nearly 50 skins in the KNHM were collected by H.H. King in 1920/21 at the Letti Basin (18.22N, 30.47E). Elsewhere in the north Sudan records were few. Cave & Macdonald (1955) noted that it is a "Very common non-breeding visitor, October to March, in the old Dongola Province" while

Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960) stated (for the northern Sudan) that it appeared to be extending its range, but this has not been borne out by observations since their book was written: there are no recent records of mass occurrence and only very small numbers winter uncommonly south of the Sahara.

The reasons for the change in status are not known and it is not clear whether, in fact, the species occurred in large numbers only in a few years.

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- Scopus* 8: 36-38, June 1984

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#### FURTHER NOTES ON BIRDS NEW OR LITTLE KNOWN IN THE SUDAN

During six years (1977-1983) of intensive study of birds in the Sudan, a number of birds were added to the country's avifauna (Nikolaus 1979a, b, 1981, 1982a, b). The final results of this work will be given in a distributional atlas for the country (using a 1-degree square mapping system) with notes on habitat and status (Nikolaus in prep.).

In the species list which follows, additions to the Sudan list are marked with an asterisk.

#### White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

The rare occurrence in the extreme north is documented by Bowen (1926): a specimen was collected in December 1920 at Morghani Island, Dongola (c. 19.20N, 30.30E). No other records have been traced until the winter of 1982-83 when one was caught alive by local people near the Kashim el Girba dam/Atbara River (14.55N, 35.55E) in December 1982. A further 12 birds were seen near Port Sudan (19.37N, 37.12E) on 24 December 1982 by St. Paterson (in litt.).

#### \*Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota*

In the Khartoum Natural History Museum is a mounted specimen from Gogrial (8.32N, 28.05E), Bhar el Ghazal collected in 1956. Another recent sight rec-



ord of three birds in the spring of 1981 from Khartoum by A. Pettet and G. Lenton (pers. comm.) supports the idea that it occurs regularly as a non-breeding visitor in Sudan.

[\*White-backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconotus*

This species has not been reported from the Sudan, even though it may be expected in the Sudd. There is, however, a mounted specimen in the Khartoum Natural History Museum (unfortunately without proper data) but, according to the label it was collected on the same 1956 expedition as the Hottentot Teal mentioned above.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*

Since the Eurasian Sparrowhawk *A. nisus* is a regular winter visitor to northern Sudan, it is difficult to give clear information on the very similar Levant Sparrowhawk which had, hitherto, only been collected once in the Sudan (on the Boma Hills (6.10N, 34.30E) in late December 1936 Cave 1938).

Now there are two more recent observations: on 22 October 1982 D.J. Pearson and the author saw one male (with active primary moult) hunting around the netting site at Wad Medani (14.24N, 33.30E) along the Blue Nile. It could be separated from the Eurasian Sparrowhawk, which had been encountered regularly during the previous few days between the Red Sea Hills and Wad Medani, and the smaller Shikra *A. badius* by the grey cheeks and the very long pale underwings with very dark tips.

During the 1983 spring migration at Khor Baraka (18.03N, 37.30E) in the Tokar delta, Red Sea, single Eurasian Sparrowhawks passed through regularly in April. However, on 24 and 25 April 12 and 18 sparrowhawks passed, slowly circling in a tight flock low over the bush. Among the group of 18 were at least four adult male *A. brevipes* and it seems most likely that all belonged to this species, especially since they were migrating in such a different way from the *A. nisus* encountered previously.

Porter & Willis (1968) counted 5224 sparrowhawks on autumn passage at the Bosphorus, out of which probably 4000 were *A. brevipes*. They also noted the habit of migrating in flocks, in contrast to that of *A. nisus*.

Lesser Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

Bowen (1926) stated that it was "rare on northern rivers" while Cave & Macdonald (1955) recorded it as "possibly not uncommon, particularly in coastal districts." Ash (1980) summarized all recently known records for eastern Africa and found nothing to add to these earlier statements for the Sudan.

Additional recent records are as follows:

coast: 1 on 29 October 1980 at Suakin (GN, pers. obs.)

1 November 1981 at Suakin (St. Paterson, *in litt.*)

1 September and October 1981 at Port Sudan (St. Paterson *in litt.*)

inland: 1 in October 1977 at the Jebel Aulia dam, White Nile (15.15N, 32.28E) (Pettet 1979) and one at the same place in January 1983 (GN, pers. obs.)

These records suggest that it is a regular but uncommon winter visitor along the Red Sea coast and up the Nile.

\*Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus*

Even though it is widely distributed in sub-Saharan Africa on larger inland waters, it has never been listed for the Sudan.

It was observed first on the Jebel Aulia dam, White Nile on 24 August 1981 by G. Lenton and the author, when two were encountered with a single Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*. The second record was of an adult in full breeding dress which was caught and ringed on 26 June 1982 on the White Nile

at Khartoum (15.35N, 32.30E) by the author.

The status of the species is still unknown but it is most likely that a few occur regularly in summer, while it is possible that in the past it had been confused with *L. ridibundus*.

*\*Mediterranean Gull Larus melanocephalus*

There are two recent sight records from the Red Sea coast: one was seen in April 1981 at Suakin by St. Paterson (in litt.), while another, in full breeding plumage was seen on 23 March 1983 at Port Sudan by the author.

There are no other records from the Red Sea (Cramp & Simmons 1983) but Britton (1980) gives two records from Kenya.

*Lesser Crested Tern Sterna bengalensis*

An adult (wing 298 mm, weight 160 g) which was caught and ringed at night on 26 June 1982 along the White Nile at Khartoum is the only inland record of this species which is, however, a common breeding bird on the Red Sea islands.

*\*Sooty Tern Sterna fuscata*

While the Bridled Tern *S. anaethetus* is a common breeder on the Sudan Red Sea islands, the very similar Sooty Tern had never been recorded. On 13 August 1982, near Mohamed Gol (20.53N, 37.07E), two adults were resting on coral a few metres off the shore together with up to ten adult White-eyed Gulls *Larus leucophthalmus*, which were about the same size as the terns. The large size and the very dark upperparts and pure white underparts separated them at once from the familiar Bridled Tern, several of which had been handled for ringing during the previous few days.

*\*Arctic Tern Sterna paradisaea*

Even more surprising than the inland Lesser Crested Tern mentioned above, was an adult Arctic Tern in full breeding dress caught and ringed at night on 16 May 1982 along the White Nile at Khartoum. The bird weighed 80 g and had a wing of 263 mm.

The Arctic Tern is an unaccountably rare bird in eastern Africa north of Zululand - where it is, however, common (Clancey 1964) - although there are recent records from Somalia, the first of which was also inland and also in May, on 23rd (Ash 1983).

*\*Iranian Irania gutturalis*

This species had been expected to occur on autumn passage during the ringing programme on the Red Sea coast since 1980 (Nikolaus 1983). According to Smith (1957) it is common in autumn to the southeast in the Eritrean hills. However, it was not until autumn 1983 that three birds were caught and ringed at Arba' at (19.48N, 37.03E), the first for the Sudan. The first two birds, in immature plumage, were caught on 7 and 17 August, and the third, an adult male, was caught on 5 September and stayed in the area until 14th increasing its weight from 19 to 21.5 g.

These few records show that the Sudan is northwest of its normal migration route from Asia Minor, via Arabia and Ethiopia to the East African winter quarters.

*\*Acrocephalus sp.*

A population of pale, grey, small acrocephaline warblers breeds in the coastal mangroves of the Sudan. These birds are probably the same as those mentioned by Smith (1964) from Eritrea, Ash (1977), also from Eritrea, and also noted by Fry, Williamson & Ferguson-Lees (1974). Seventeen specimens from Suakin are deposited in the Bonn and Stuttgart Museums and await further taxonomic study.

\*Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

Like the last species, this reed warbler also has a pale grey population confined to coastal mangroves along the Red Sea. Birds of this type are also mentioned by Smith (1961) from Eritrea and Ash (1983) has recently added the species to the Somalia avifauna.

Around Suakin it is common and probably resident. It breeds in spring. The wing moult is prolonged, from late July continuing at least until December. The wing-length ranges from 79 to 87 mm ( $n = 14$ ) and the weight from 21 to 29 g.

\*Grasshopper Warbler (eastern race) *Locustella naevia straminea*

Records of the species in eastern Africa are few. Besides an extraordinary June record from Kenya (Fayad & Fayad 1977) it is only known from Ethiopia (Ash 1978) where it arrives in September.

The first record for the Sudan was on 18 August 1983 at Arba'at, when a first year female was caught and collected (now in the Stuttgart Museum). A second one caught at the same place on 21 September 1983 unfortunately escaped from the mist net before it could be handled. St. Paterson (*in litt.*) saw a small *Locustella* in March 1982 in low vegetation near Port Sudan which was thought to have been a Grasshopper Warbler.

Grey Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus*

In Africa only recorded from Massawa (Ethiopia) in 1850 and from Jebel Elba (22.10N, 36.20E) in 1943.

In the early morning of 30 March 1983 during the first round of the mist nets at Khor Baraka, Tokor delta, a female Grey Hypocolius was seen sitting on a net pole. When disturbed it flew along the net and disappeared into thick bush. Earlier, A. Pettet (pers. comm.) saw one in November at Erkowit (18.46N 37.06E). Clearly this species is only a vagrant to the African Red Sea coast.

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## LARGE NUMBERS OF BIRDS KILLED BY ELECTRIC POWER LINE

The harbour at Port Sudan receives its water from wells 25km away to the northwest at Khor Arba'at. The pumps at the wells are electric and are connected to an overhead power line for which, over the last 10 km, metal poles are used. During my first visit at the beginning of September 1982, a few long-dead vultures (four Lappet-faced *Torgos tracheliotus* and several Egyptian *Neophron percnopterus*) were noticed near these poles. Three weeks later, on 2 October, this power line had killed a surprisingly large number of additional birds: three Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus*, at least 50 more Egyptian Vultures (about one under each pole) and a Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis*. All of them had been electrocuted by touching the wires while they perched on the poles.

When I visited the place again in March 1983 only three new dead birds were found - two Egyptian Vultures and a single Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*.

The large number of Egyptian Vultures killed in September 1982 could be evidence that the birds were migrants, not familiar with these power poles, which had arrived possibly from the Palaearctic. The disappearance of Egyptian Vultures from around Khartoum during the last 20 years could be explained by this phenomenon.

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A BROAD-BILLED PRION *PACHYPTILA VITTATA* ON THE KENYA COAST

On 10 September 1983 we watched a prion over a period of some 20 minutes, at distances of 100-300 m off the northeastern extremity of Ras Ngomeni (2.58S, 40.30E). With the afternoon sun on the bird, viewing conditions from the 10-m high coral cliffs were excellent. The bird spent several short periods settled on the sea when it was difficult to see in the heavy swell, but it took to the wing repeatedly and was watched in flight directly offshore over six periods of one to two minutes each.

A zig-zagging progression was followed low above the water, but only a few yards were gained each time into the force 5 southeasterly headwind. Rather heavy flapping alternated with short glides, during which the wings were held almost straight and slightly bowed, and the tips were noted to be somewhat rounded. The upperparts, including the top of the head and the tail, were dove grey, but the leading primaries were blackish and there was a prominent blackish bar across the greater covert region, broadest near the body. The tail appeared roundish with a broad blackish tip, best seen when the bird wheeled down to feed from the sea surface. A blackish mark was conspicuous near and behind the eye. The underwing and the underparts were white, but substantial dark grey patches were conspicuous on the sides of the breast. The bill did not appear particularly thick when viewed in lateral profile. Few other birds were present for size comparison, but the wingspan of the prion was judged to be 55-60 per cent of that of an immediately adjacent Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii*.

The prions *Pachyptila* have commonly been regarded as comprising five or even six species (see, for example, Brown et al. 1982). However, Cox (1980) has argued in favour of admitting only three species: the Broad-billed Prion *P. vittata* (including Salvin's Prion *P. v. salvini* and the Dove Prion *P. v. desolata*), the Fairy Prion *P. turtur* (including the Fulmar Prion *P. t. crassirostris*) and the Thin-billed Prion *P. belcheri*. This arrangement has been followed, for example, by Harrison (1983). In the case of the Ngomeni bird, the dark face patch clearly excludes *P. turtur*. On the other hand, the tail marking with broad dark tip and no white at the sides, the prominence of the black wing markings and the 'chunky' jizz with rather heavy flight would appear to rule out *P. belcheri*. The prominent breast markings, clearly visible at over 200 m, would suggest that the bird was *P. v. desolata*, but neither *P. v. salvini* nor *P. v. vittata* can be entirely ruled out. Thus, we would identify the bird as a Broad-billed Prion *P. vittata* (*sensu* Cox 1980), probably *P. v. desolata*.

Prions are recorded off the coasts of southern Africa to 30S, and occasionally to 26S, mainly during the period May to July (Clancey 1980). Most records refer to *P. v. desolata* and, to a lesser extent, *P. v. vittata*. A small wreck of *desolata* was recorded on the coast of southeast Somalia during August 1979 (Ash 1983), but the only previous prion records from East African waters are of two probable *P. vittata* off southeast Tanzania in July 1965 (Britton 1980) and an unidentified bird off Shimonzi in August 1981 (EANHS Orn. Sub-Committee 1983).

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#### AYRES' HAWK EAGLE *HIERAAETUS DUBIUS* FEEDING ON A FRUIT BAT

On 20 November 1982 I encountered an Ayres' Hawk Eagle feeding on a fruit bat (probably of the genus *Eidolon*) at the Kakamega Forest station in Western Kenya. I had already seen a pair of hawk eagles several times earlier in the morning when, at about 10:00, I observed a large raptor glide through the canopy of the spindly second-growth forest. The bird landed in full view on a horizontal branch under the main crown of a forest tree and I recognized it as the smaller and paler bird of the pair of hawk eagles, probably the male. A conspicuous chestnut-brown 'patch' on the lower abdomen proved to be a fair-sized mammal. The bird mantled its prey with half-spread wings for several minutes before positioning the mammal to a position where I could see that it was a fruit bat. With the bat flat on its back along the branch, the wings drooping down out of the way, the hawk eagle began to feed, first tearing the fur from the neck region and then eating towards the base of the skull. Next it ate the tongue and then clipped out and cleaned a jawbone, before moving down to the breast. I watched the performance with a 20x telescope over a period of 30 minutes, and the bird was still eating when I left. Its mate never appeared during this period.

Though inexplicably rare over most of its broad range, Ayres' Hawk Eagle has been studied intimately in Kenya (see, for example, Brown 1971, Brown & Davey 1978). Small birds are the main prey of this dashing forest raptor, typically doves and a variety of medium-sized passerines. Larger gamebirds are preyed upon occasionally. Published accounts agree that some mammalian prey is taken, especially rodents, but the only species listed is *Paraxerus ochraceus*, a small squirrel (Brown et al. 1982). I can find no mention in the literature of this hawk eagle feeding on bats of any kind. Fruit bats are by no means rare in the Kakamega Forest region, and if located during the day-time are probably not difficult for this fierce predator to capture, so it seems especially interesting that it has not been recorded previously as utilizing this food source.

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MARTIAL EAGLE *POLEMAETUS BELLICOSUS* ATTACKING  
HARTEBEEST CALF *ALCELAPHUS BUSELAPHUS*

On 7 August 1983, in the Tarangire National Park (c. 4S, 36E), I observed a young antelope hiding behind a tree beside the track. Being uncertain of the species, I approached slowly. At about 50m, it left the tree, cantered away from me down the road and was immediately identifiable from its gait as a very young hartebeest calf. At the moment the calf began to run I saw a Martial Eagle perched in a nearby tree. The eagle appeared to be immature because its underparts were very pale with few dark spots. It took off and started pursuing the hartebeest round the corner of the track and out of sight. A few seconds later the calf reappeared galloping straight towards me with the eagle some distance behind. As the calf came near me, it swerved off the road towards the river and started making a screaming bleating noise. The eagle also swerved off the line of the road, tilting in and out of the trees following the calf. I then saw the parent hartebeest approaching from the other side of the river about 100m away, presumably in response to the bleating. Just as the calf reached the river bank, the eagle caught up with it and dived at it. I did not see exactly what happened at that moment, but obviously the eagle missed as, a second later, the calf reappeared on the other side of the river and joined its parent, apparently unharmed, and the eagle flew off. On the one hand I was relieved for the calf's sake, while on the other hand it would have been interesting to see how the eagle would have dealt with the calf, which I estimated at about 15kg. This weight would have made it more than twice the weight of the eagle itself (given by Brown et al. (1982) as 3010 to 6200 g). Small antelope up to the size of an impala *Aepyceros melampus* calf or of a weight up to 5kg have been recorded in the Martial Eagle's diet (Brown et al., op. cit.) but no mention is made of an antelope as large as a young hartebeest.

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A PINTAIL SNIPE *GALLINAGO STENURA* AT NAIVASHA

At midday on 23 January 1982 I flushed about 40 African Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis* and 20 Common Snipe *G. gallinago* from flooded grassland brodering the tall sedge on the western shore of Lake Naivasha, Kenya. With them was a snipe with a strange weak call and a slower flight which lacked white on the trailing edge of the wing. I flushed this bird three more times during the afternoon from the same spot, and observed it in good sunlight, placing myself on one occasion so that it flew past giving a good side view at about 10m.

The bird always consorted with Common Snipe, and good comparisons with this species were possible. It was similar in size and certainly no larger than Common Snipe, but its flight was slower, more or less direct, and it pitched on each occasion no more than 50 to 150m away out in the sedge. It invariably called when flushed, an abrupt grating note which I recorded as *krrek* or *quek*, weaker and less explosive than the call of Common Snipe, but to my ears similar in pitch. The feet trailed noticeably beyond the tail in flight, the wings seemed rather narrow and the bill was not particularly long for a snipe. The whole appearance was duller than that of a Common Snipe. The upperwing looked pale and uniform, dull buffish on the forewing, greyer towards the rear, and with no visible white trailing edge to the secondaries. The upperparts appeared to lack the rich tones of a Common Snipe, and body

stripes were indistinct and seen only when the bird flew directly away. No white was visible in the tail. The flanks were well barred, but the centre of the belly was white.

The above features are all consistent with the identification of the bird as a Pintail Snipe *G. stenura*, a species which breeds in eastern and central Siberia and normally winters in India and southeast Asia. I have also considered the possibility that it might have been a Swinhoe's Snipe *G. megala*. This long-distance migrant which breeds in central Siberia also lacks a pale trailing edge to the wing and has more barring on the flanks and more buff marking on the upperparts and upperwing coverts than a Common Snipe. Indeed, without reference to the number of tail feathers (usually 26 in Pintail Snipe and 20 in Swinhoe's) many specimens of these two Asiatic species are impossible to separate on plumage in the museum (author's pers. obs.). However, Swinhoe's Snipe tends to look bulkier and a little larger than Common Snipe in the field, and its feet do not usually project appreciably beyond the tail in flight; moreover, it is usually silent, or utters a short gruff grunt when flushed (Madge 1977 and *in litt.*, Cramp & Simmons 1983). I am confident therefore that the Naivasha bird was not this species but a Pintail Snipe.

There are five previous recorded occurrences of the Pintail Snipe in Africa. Two were shot on Socotra late last century (Ogilvie-Grant & Forbes 1903); one was shot on the Juba River, Somalia, in March in about 1920 (van Someren 1929); one was netted, ringed and photographed at Naivasha in January 1969 (Backhurst 1969); and one to two were present at Bamburi, Mombasa, between September 1981 and January 1982 (EANHS Orn. Sub-Committee 1984). It is also of interest that four Pintail Snipe were located in eastern Saudi Arabia between October 1981 and March 1982 (Bundy 1983).

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#### FOUR-BANDED SANDGROUSE *PTEROCLES QUADRICINCTUS* IN NORTHWEST KENYA

The Four-banded Sandgrouse occurs across the northern tropics of Africa from the west coast eastwards approximately between latitudes 8N and 17N, to the southern Sudan and Ethiopia, and southeast to northern Uganda and northwest Kenya (Snow 1978). On the southeastern extremities of its range, records for Kenya have been restricted to a specimen collected on 5 August 1905 at "Lake



Rudolph" (National Museum collection, Nairobi), and to Jackson's (1938) mention of it breeding along the Kerio River at the end of January 1923 (several clutches found) and occurring along the upper reaches of the Turkwell River on an unspecified date. Jackson's records are reiterated by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1957) and Britton (1980). In the course of researches associated with the Kenya bird atlas (Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.), the first recent records of this species for Kenya have emerged.

T.J. Barnley (*in litt.*) observed large numbers coming to drink at dusk at a dam at Kodich (= Koduch) (1.38N, 35.03E), West Pokot, in October 1975, and he mist-netted specimens at this locality on several occasions before and after this date. He notes (*in litt.*) that they did not seem to frequent a dam to the south of this area near Kongelai (1.28N, 35.01E), so that Kodich may be their southern limit in this area.

G. Nikolaus (*in litt.*) has recorded the species on the Kenya/Sudan border northwest of Lokichokio (4.12N, 34.21E) in June, November and December.

On 25 February 1984, while camped at Kamathia (= Kailemothia) (4.56N, 35.19E), just south of the Kenya/Sudan border, we observed several sandgrouse flying over at dusk. There was insufficient light for specific identification but they were noted as having a large body and small wings, and a wavering flight reminiscent of a quail *Coturnix*; they lacked elongated central tail feathers and made a shrill, squeaking whistle unfamiliar to us. Several sandgrouse flushed in the stoney bushy grassland during the day had given brief, incomplete views, but appeared to have heavy, dark markings on their upperparts.

The following evening, we waited at dusk beside one of a series of waterholes formed by a line of small springs to try to observe these birds coming in to drink. At 19:00 all diurnal species had left the waterhole but no sandgrouse were present. At 19:05 sandgrouse began to arrive in parties of two to five. At first they settled about 50 m from the water but, in the next few minutes, the air was filled with their calls and wing noise and, by 19:12, there were approximately 1000 individuals on the ground, some drinking and the rest tightly congregated around the waterhole. The light was still sufficient for plumage features to be seen through binoculars and all birds examined were this species. Darkness fell in a matter of minutes and we left the waterhole at 19:20.

On the return journey to our camp, we checked an adjacent waterhole but heard only one sandgrouse. This apparent concentration of the sandgrouse on the pool that we kept under observation was possibly real, since many other species of birds had preferred it to the adjacent waters during the day. The sandgrouse appeared at the water just before dusk and many were drinking and leaving almost immediately, thus possibly accomplishing much or all of their return flight before total darkness fell. A few calls heard in the area during the following dawn were presumably of birds drinking before daybreak. This dispersal over the surrounding country throughout the hours of daylight, and movement to water only during the brief twilight periods is also noted for this species by Jackson (1938).

This species probably occurs regularly in northwest Kenya, and T.J. Barnley's and our observations indicate that it can do so in considerable numbers. The few records of its occurrence in Kenya most probably reflect the infrequency of observers in these far northwestern areas, together with the bird's crepuscular drinking habits.

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WHITE-BROWED COUCAL *CENTROPUS SUPERCILIOSUS* ROBBING NEST OF  
GROSBEAK WEAVER *AMBLYSPIZA ALBIFRONS* OF EGGS

On 11 February 1984 at 09:00 at the swamp near point 27c in Nairobi National Park, I was observing a pair of Grosbeak Weavers at their nest, situated about 2 m above the water level in reeds.

When both weavers were away from the nest a White-browed Coucal investigated it and began to tear it apart. It gained entry for its head (not through the weavers' entry hole) and removed an egg, which it took below into the reeds. Five minutes later it returned and, after tearing away part of the nest, removed a second egg, again taking it in its beak into the reeds below the nest. After a further five minutes it returned to the nest, whereupon the female Grosbeak Weaver returned. The female weaver showed no aggression but the coucal left the scene. After inspecting the nest the weaver left, and had not returned half an hour later.

From my observations it would seem that the coucal possibly ate the eggs. I can find no reference to such activity in the literature at my disposal, which is considerable.

Patrick J. Frere, Box 14490, Nairobi

Scopus 8: 48, June 1984

Received 2 May 1984

HINDE'S PIED BABBLER *TURDOIDES HINDEI* SOUTH OF MACHAKOS, KENYA

Hinde's Pied Babbler is a little known species endemic to the eastern and southeastern periphery of the central Kenya highlands. It has been the subject of much comment, admirably summarized by Plumb (1979) - hereafter quoted as 'Plumb' - with reference, amongst other things, to its apparently radical contraction of range during this century. A record from a locality where it has been considered extinct is thus significant.

Early in the morning of 27 November 1983, while collecting data for the Kenya bird atlas scheme (Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.), I located a group of these babblers on Potha ranch (1.35S, 37.14E), about 8 km south of Machakos, Kenya. The party of at least five birds was in and around the thickets along a narrow wooded stream valley, and the birds had moved a few hundred metres along this dry watercourse when they were seen by participants in an EANHs excursion about three hours later.

The watercourse is a tributary of the Ikiwe River, which ultimately flows into the Athi; Plumb notes other localities for this species associated with the headwaters of the Athi. The habitat resembles the second type noted by Plumb for the species in the Embu District, i.e. bushy stream gullies in quite dry and open woodland. The individuals in the group had similar plumage, with no obvious albinism. Their behaviour was very similar to Plumb's descriptions: a) they frequented the dense thickets on the watercourse's edge where, when

silent, they were obscure and very easily overlooked; b) calling mostly occurred when they were disturbed by observers; c) while favouring the thicket interiors, one or more of the group at times flew up to high and exposed perches on the riparian trees, where they would remain for several minutes. Northern Pied Babblers *Turdoides hypoleucos* are resident (D. Percival, pers. comm.) about a kilometre away in lush, garden vegetation.

Williams (1967) recorded this species in Machakos District but failed to give details, and reiterated this statement in Williams & Arlott (1980). Mrs D. Percival (pers. comm.) notes that the ranch's habitat has not changed significantly since 1950 because it is too dry for large scale cultivation, and that J.G. Williams was a frequent visitor in the past, particularly favouring the stream valleys in the otherwise fairly open country. Thus it is possible that Potha represents at least one of Williams' 'Machakos district' localities. Certainly the occurrence of the species on the ranch in the past is indicated, possibly by Williams himself, in the Percival's copy of Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1955).

Plumb could trace no recent records from the Machakos area, the nearest ones being from Oldoinyo Sapuk (50 km to the north) in 1970, where more recent searches have failed to relocate the bird. Potha is thus 65 km south of Plumb's southernmost post-1971 record.

This is a localized, highly resident, and at times skulking species, and Plumb notes that its apparent absence over much of its former range may be due to lack of observation. This could be the case, particularly in the little known areas from Machakos east to Kitui and Nziu, and Tennent (MS) described the species as "common in bushy valleys" in Kitui District in the early 1960s, whereas the only other record from this area was in 1918 - a collected bird noted by Plumb. The validity of Plumb's proposed range contraction is thus open to question as the species may persist, as at Potha, in obscure valleys in little known areas.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am most grateful to Mrs Dorothy Percival for her background information on this subject and also for her warm hospitality.

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Adrian D. Lewis, Department of Geology, University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi

A KENYA RECORD OF THE BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR *OENANTHE HISPANICA*

On 23 March 1984 an unusually marked male wheatear *Oenanthe* sp. was noticed by DJP at Athi River (1.25S, 36.58E), Kenya, perching on small dead bushes and posts 1-2m high, and dropping down frequently to feed on the rather rocky open ground. The bird was quite shy, but was approached several times to within 25m, and was viewed through binoculars in company with a male Northern Wheatear *O. oenanthe*, and with a male Pied Wheatear *O. pleschanka*, which it chased and drove off. It was similar in size and habits to the Pied Wheatear, but differed in having the throat white, and the mantle and back pale, uniform with the cap and hindneck. The whole underparts were white apart from a faint buff wash across the breast. The upperparts from forehead to back were buffish-white, marked with greyish-brown. Except for a black centre, the tail was white practically to its tip, but with black extending noticeably up the distal edge of the outer feather (Fig. 1d). The axillaries and underwing coverts were black. The legs were smaller and thinner than those of the accompanying Northern Wheatear, and the grating call resembled that of a Pied Wheatear. However, the rare white-throated form of the Pied Wheatear appeared to be ruled out by the wholly pale upperparts (a black face mask was well separated from blackish wings and scapulars), and the bird was identified as a Black-eared Wheatear *O. hispanica*.

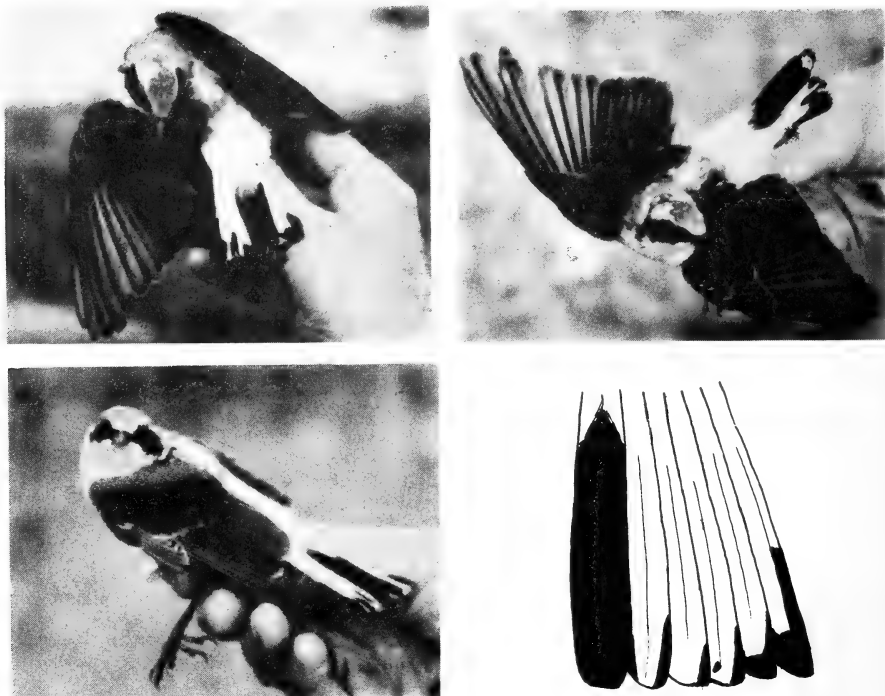


Fig. 1. Male Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*, Athi River, 25 March 1984. 1a - 1c: from Ektachrome transparencies by DKR; 1d: half tail by DJP

The bird remained at the same site until at least 5 April, and it was caught, ringed and photographed (Fig. 1a-c) by DB and DKR on 25 March. In the hand the mantle and back feathers were seen to be white basally, tinged beige-grey distally, and with extensive greyish-brown tipping remaining - especially on the crown and sides of the mantle (Fig. 1a-c). The black face mask extended over the base of the upper mandible, but in a band no more than 1 mm wide. The flight feathers, upper wing coverts, tertials and scapulars were blackish-brown, with small buff tips remaining on the primary and greater coverts, alula, secondaries and some lesser coverts, indicating that the bird was in its first year. The distal two thirds of the centre tail feather was black. Black was continuous across the tips of the outer two feathers and extended for 24 mm up the outer web of the outermost. It was confined, however, to narrow marks on the inner and outer corners of the second from centre feather, and on the outer corners alone of the third and fourth feathers, so that medially the second to fourth pairs of feathers were white to their tips (Fig. 1d). Measurements (mm) were: wing 93; P3 longest; P2 -5; P4 -4; P5 -2; P6 -7; P1, 3 > primary coverts. The bird weighed only 18 g when caught and carried little visible subcutaneous fat.

The whitish underlying colour of the upperparts and the practically white underparts would indicate that the bird was of the eastern race *O. h. melano-leuca*. This, as far as we are aware, is the first properly documented occurrence of this species in East Africa.

Daphne Backhurst, Box 24734, Nairobi, D.J. Pearson, Department of Biochemistry University of Nairobi, Box 30197, Nairobi and D.K. Richards, Box 24545, Nairobi

Scopus 8: 50-51, June 1984

Received 2 May 1984

#### RECENT COASTAL RECORDS OF THE WHITE-STARRED FOREST ROBIN *POGONOCICHLA STELLATA* IN TANZANIA

The White-starred Forest Robin ranges from the Cape Province of South Africa to isolated montane populations in northern East Africa (Oatley 1982a). Apart from coastal forests south of the Tropic of Capricorn it is basically a high-land species. Records from below 1000 m in the East Usambaras and a single one from 300 m in the Pugu Hills were presumed to have been wanderers (White 1962), although Stuart & Jensen (1981) gave several records from inland eastern Tanzanian forests below 500 m. Records from Mrima Hill (Britton, Britton & Coverdale 1980) during August and September included spotted immature birds. This local breeding population was assumed to have been sedentary.

During an ongoing study in the Pugu Hills (6.53S, 39.06E) near Dar es Salaam several additional records have been obtained. Observations include adults on 19 September 1981 and 11 September 1982 and two spotted juveniles around an ant swarm on 3 October 1981. Two adults were netted on 17 July 1983 and single juveniles netted on 21 August 1982 and 11 September 1983. Full mensural data are available for netted birds. Netting and regular visits by several birdwatchers in every month of the year since June 1981 have failed to reveal Forest Robins from November through to June. It is therefore suggested that the species is a scarce migrant breeder to the area.

In coastal Natal, Forest Robins do not occur during the wet months (Oatley 1982b). The rains around Dar es Salaam are concentrated from November to May, indicating a similar situation. From breeding data obtained in South Africa (Oatley 1982c) it seems likely that egg-laying in the Pugu Hills occurred in July.

These birds were not assigned to any race but *P. s. orientalis* is the most

likely of the seven races currently recognized for East Africa (Britton 1980, Britton et al. 1980). Further fieldwork may well clarify this.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Terry Oatley, G.R. Cunningham-van Someren and Graeme Backhurst for comments and help on an earlier draft of this note.

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N.E. Baker, Box 1599, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

*Scopus* 8: 51-52, June 1984

Received 31 October 1983, revised 19 April 1984

#### CORRECTIONS

David Moyer has kindly written in to correct two errors.

In *Scopus* 6, p. 36, 1st paragraph, 7th line: should be *Euphorbia obovalifolia*

In *Scopus* 7, p. 51, 'A record of the Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata* from Lake Sundu in southwestern Tanzania', 1st line: the date should have been 11 September 1981.

We are most grateful to him for correcting these mistakes which were in the MS.



#### NOTICE

6th Pan African Ornithological Congress  
Botswana 1985

From Circular No. 1, May 1984

The Congress will be held at the Motel Marang, 4 km outside Francistown, from Friday 29 March to Thursday 4 April 1985.

★ All rates are per person and are in US\$, SA Rand, Botswana Pula ★

REGISTRATION FEES: Congress delegates 90 up to 31 October 1984  
120 after that date

For wives/spouses (no copy of the Proceedings supplied) 50 up to 31 October  
1984 and 75 after that date.

ACCOMMODATION COSTS: five categories will be available, full details in the circular. Briefly, the Motel Marang provides Luxury Chalets, Regular rooms, Tented Accommodation and camping facilities for those bringing their own camping equipment. In addition, Thalapama Lodge, 4 km away, offers single and double rooms; no singles are available at Motel Marang. Costs range from 12.50/night camping, own gear to 60 full board in a Luxury Chalet at the Motel Marang and 63 dinner, bed and breakfast at Thalapama Lodge in a single room.

Details from Ken Newman, Box 65426, Benmore 2010, South Africa (for those in southern Africa) and Don Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi (for all others).

in the case of books, the town of publication and the publisher should be given. A number of works, which are cited frequently, should not be listed under 'References'; the name(s) of the author(s) and date(s) of publication should be given in the text in the normal way.

All contributions, which will be acknowledged, should be sent to the Editor, G.C. Backhurst, Box 24702, Nairobi, Kenya.

#### WORKS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE LISTED UNDER 'REFERENCES'

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This forms the fifth issue of *Scopus* and each report covers one calendar year. Records of Afrotropical Region (i.e. Ethiopian Region and Malagasy Sub-Region) and Oceanic birds should be sent to D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi; records of Palaearctic Region birds to Dr D.J. Pearson, Department of Biochemistry, Box 30197, Nairobi. Records should be sent in early in the new year to ensure the speedy production of the Bird Report. Reports of rare birds may be telephoned through to any OS-C member (numbers inside front cover) in the hope that the bird(s) may be seen by others. Criteria covering the submission of Bird Report records are given in *Scopus* Supplement, June 1982, copies of which are available from D.A. Turner.

#### BIRDS OF EAST AFRICA

Copies of this 270-page book are available from the Secretary, EANH, Box 44486, Nairobi for £8.00 or US\$17.00 surface mail to anywhere in the world.

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# SCOPUS

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Contributions should be typed in 1½ or double spacing on one side of the paper only, with wide margins all round, and should be submitted in duplicate. Exceptionally, clear hand-written MSS will be considered but these too should be sent in duplicate. Both English and scientific names of birds should be given when the species is first mentioned, thereafter only one should be used. English and scientific names should be those of *Birds of East Africa* unless the species does not occur in that work.

Tables, which should be numbered, *should appear in the typescript, NOT grouped on separate sheets at the end*. Metric units should be used.

Illustrations should be on good quality white paper, bristol board or tracing material, in line, and should not be larger than 19 x 23 cm. Lettering (in black) will be the responsibility of the author and should be done neatly in Letraset (or similar), no larger than 14 point (3.9 mm). Each illustration should be numbered (Fig. 1, etc.) and be provided with a legend typed on a separate sheet of paper. Photographs will also be considered.

Any references cited should be listed at the end of the contribution following the form used in this issue. *Names of periodicals MUST be given in full and,*

*Continued inside back cover*

# SCOPUS

## A FIELD STUDY OF THE CORNCRAKE *CREX CREX* AT NDOLA, ZAMBIA

P.B. Taylor

The major wintering area of the Corncrake *Crex crex* is believed to be the eastern half of Africa from Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique through Malawi and Zimbabwe to eastern South Africa (Cramp & Simmons 1980). Although the habits of this crane are well-known in the Palaearctic region, and although the species is regarded as common or regular over much of its winter range (Cramp & Simmons 1980), almost nothing has been recorded of its habits in Africa. During my residence in Zambia from 1975 to 1980 I had the opportunity to make regular observations of several rallid species at an area of grassland bordering permanent swamp at Itawa, Ndola (12.57S, 28.47E) at an altitude of 1300 m. The grassland held a small number of wintering Corncrakes and frequent visits with my dog produced numerous sightings of these and other cranes. The amount of human disturbance around the study area was considerable and it was therefore not possible to trap the cranes, but by frequent observation I was able to estimate the total number of wintering Corncrakes and to record details of their habits and movements. My observations are summarized in this paper.

### THE STUDY AREA

The study area lies at the southern end of the 11 km-long Itawa dambo, much of which is permanent swamp and which represents the outcrop of the local water table. The underlying rocks are limestone and dolomite, and the surface soil is grey clay with a proportion of silt (Moore 1967). The vegetation of the study area is grassland, some of which remains dry throughout the year although much becomes damp or inundated during the November to April rains. The drier grassland contains scattered *Acacia* bushes, moister areas have thickets of *Acacia* with *Lantana*, *Ficus* and *Brachystegia*, and the wettest areas contain small dense evergreen thickets.

### METHODS

Frequent visits were made to the study area from early 1975 to mid 1980 but detailed studies of the Corncrake population were carried out only from November 1978 to April 1980. By recording the exact location of each Corncrake

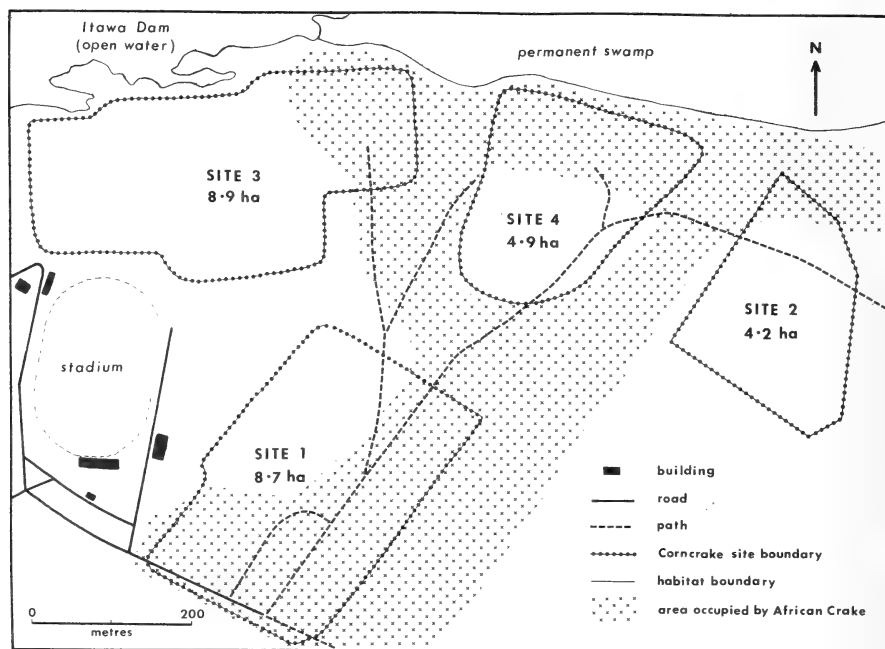


Fig. 1. The Itawa study area

TABLE 1

*Visits to Itawa sites 1978-79 and 1979-80*

	Period of occupation	Days in period	No. of visits	Successful visits	Average No. of days between visits
Site 1	4 Dec 78 - 9 Apr 79	127	50	24(48%)	2.5 (2.1)*
	5 Dec 79 - 7 Apr 80	124	33	16(48%)	3.8
Site 2	26 Jan 80 - 4 Apr 80	70	15	10(67%)	4.7
Site 3	16 Jan 79 - 18 Mar 79	62	24	9(37%)	2.6
Site 4	20 Dec 78 - 1 Mar 79	72	15	7(47%)	4.8 (3.5)*

\* Figures in brackets represent the average excluding the 20-day period of the observer's absence

sighting and by ensuring that all parts of the study area were frequently searched with the aid of the dog, it was possible to delimit the areas of grassland occupied by the crakes. This work was made easier by the nature of the habitat: the occupied areas ('sites') were in patches of dry to moist grassland separated from each other by intervening unsuitable habitat (very

wet or very sparse grass) and some of their boundaries were well-defined by adjacent flooded, cleared or disturbed areas.

Four wintering sites were mapped and their areas calculated (Fig. 1); the boundaries represent the limits of the suitable habitat in all sites except site 2, which was within a large tract of apparently suitable grassland. The boundaries of site 2 were plotted by joining the loci of the outermost sightings to give a convex polygon. All records of wintering birds fell within the site boundaries. That part of the study area occupied by the breeding population of African Crakes *Crex egregia* was also determined (Taylor in prep.) and is shown in Fig. 1.

In order to estimate the wintering population of Corncrakes and to ascertain whether movements occurred either between sites or into and out of the study area, an attempt was made to search all parts of the study area regularly and to cover as many sites as possible on each visit. Four factors caused total coverage to be less than was planned:

- a) the inadvisability of searching any site too frequently because of the risk that the crakes might leave if disturbed too often and because the habitat would have suffered from excessive trampling. As nothing is known about Corncrake habits in Africa it could not be judged how much disturbance the birds would tolerate.
- b) the difficulty of searching each site's entire area at each visit to the site; this applied especially to sites 1 and 3, each of which had an area in excess of 8 ha.
- c) the prevention of some planned visits by bad weather.
- d) the absence of the observer for 20 days in December 1978 to January 1979.

During the periods 1 December to 15 April in 1978-79 and 1979-80, visits were made on 85 out of 136 days and 76 out of 137 days respectively. With the exception of the 20-day period of absence, the maximum period between visits to a site was 8 days. The average frequency of visits to each site is given in Table 1. The pattern of visits was not uniform and the methods used were far from ideal; however, it is felt that no better could have been achieved under the circumstances (trapping being impossible) and the high percentage of successful visits achieved (Table 1) shows how effective is the simple method of disturbance - with the aid of an experienced dog.

### HABITAT PREFERENCES

The preferred habitat of the Corncrake in Africa is usually given as any dry open grassland or grass plain (e.g. Benson et al. 1971, Cramp & Simmons 1980) but damper areas may also be occupied (Moreau 1972). Observations at Itawa support these statements of habitat preferences and in the study area Corncrakes occurred in grassland on the clay soil adjacent to the swamps, normally occupying the drier areas (78 per cent of 106 sightings were in dry grassland). They were most often found in the denser grass cover, were rarely seen in areas of sparse cover, and inhabited grass of heights from 0.3 to 2 m. They also occurred in moist grassland (16 per cent of sightings) and occasionally in flooded grassland (6 per cent of sightings). In the moister areas they occurred alongside the breeding African Crakes but in areas of overlap the African Crakes usually occupied the wetter patches; however, African Crakes also ventured into dry areas and both species were occasionally flushed together from dry grass. The Corncrakes did not occur in sparsely-grassed neglected ploughland in the southeast of the study area nor in neglected cultivation and maize patches immediately to the northeast. Elsewhere in

Zambia, Corncrakes were observed in similar habitat to that at Itawa but were also occasionally seen in rank grass at the edges of sewage settling tanks (e.g. at Kanini Sewage Works, Ndola), a habitat which they probably only occupied temporarily.

### POPULATION

The wintering population at Itawa was very small (2 to 3 birds each winter) and occupied no more than 26.7 ha of suitable habitat out of about 80 ha of grassland and swamp edge. No more than one individual was flushed at any site during the wintering period (December to March) and it was assumed that wintering birds were solitary, as they are normally said to be in the non-breeding season (Cramp & Simmons 1980). Furthermore, as the birds were regularly seen in the same small areas, as individuals were sometimes seen at two or more sites during one visit and as the total number of birds seen in the study area remained constant for most of the winter it was concluded that local movements did not normally take place and that all the wintering birds had been counted. It is unlikely that any wintering birds were overlooked, as the entire study area was searched and the birds were not difficult to flush. In some seasons, one or more apparently suitable sites remained unoccupied, e.g. no Corncrake was seen at site 2 until 1979-80; the reasons for this are not known.

Sites 2 and 4 appeared to be fully utilized, sightings occurring throughout their areas. Sites 1 and 3 contained somewhat less dense cover, and site 3 contained patches of permanently unsuitable habitat (large thickets, scrub) and patches which were temporarily unsuitable due to occasional flooding, grass-cutting and clearing of small areas for cultivation. The total suitable habitat within site 3 was estimated at about 4.5 ha at any time. Observations at site 1 in 1978-79 indicated that the southern half of the site was occupied in December (before the grass had grown in the northern half) and that the northern half was occupied (presumably by the same bird) from January to March; from late March the situation was reversed, with the southern half being occupied until the bird left in April. Thus for most of the winter only half of site 1 was in use (about 4.3 ha), this representing the more suitable grassland at the site. In 1979-80 a similar pattern was observed at site 1.

As individual Corncrakes could not be recognized it was not possible to show that a bird seen at a site for a long period was always the same individual, but this was thought to be probable. It may be assumed, however, that each site was occupied by only one bird and thus that the total area of grassland inhabited by one bird was between 4.2 and 8.9 ha, with only 4.3 and 4.5 ha of the two largest sites being used for most of the winter. The average area used by one bird was therefore 4.5 ha. These figures may be compared with the size of the area occupied by the breeding African Crakes (somewhat smaller than Corncrakes) at the same locality. Eight pairs of African Crakes were counted at Itawa in 41.6 ha of grassland, a density of 1 pair per 5.2 ha (Taylor in prep.); this habitat was also apparently able to support their offspring as the season advanced. Of these 41.6 ha, 10.1 ha (24.3 per cent) were within the mapped sites of the Corncrakes (see Fig. 1).

The reasons why the African Crakes were able to exist at a higher density than the Corncrakes at Itawa are not clear: possibly the wetter habitat favoured by the former species was more productive of food than the drier grassland occupied by the latter. The problem is complicated by the possibility that the feeding methods (and possibly the food) of the two species may differ (see Food and Feeding Habits below).

## MOVEMENTS AND PATTERN OF OCCURRENCE

Corncrakes arrived at Itawa from late November to late January and departed between March and early April. First and last dates were:

	First date	Last date
1976/77	23 Nov	31 Mar
1977/78	27 Dec	11 Mar
1978/79	4 Dec	9 Apr
1979/80	5 Dec	7 Apr

These dates agree well with the period of occurrence (24 November to 4 April) given for Zambia by Benson *et al.* (1971), and other recent Zambian records have also fallen within this period with the exception of 1976 when arrival was noted as early as 21 October (*Zambian Ornithological Society Newsletters* 1977-1980, Taylor 1979).

No evidence of large-scale movements was seen at Itawa (but overnight passage could have occurred) and most records probably refer to wintering birds, but scattered November to January sightings in areas not normally occupied probably represent individuals on local or long-distance movements. During the 1978-79 and 1979-80 winters birds were seen at the sites for long periods (Table 1) and, although restricted movements within one site occurred (see Population above), evidence for local movements was seen only once during each of these winters: despite searching, no Corncrakes were seen in any site from 11 to 21 February 1979 and from 27 December 1979 to 14 January 1980. The birds may have left the study area at these times and, in the former period, heavy rain may have made conditions temporarily unsuitable. In the latter period, however, conditions appeared to remain favourable. The normal pattern of occurrence was not followed in the 1977-78 winter, when the total rainfall at Ndola was 29.8 per cent higher than the average for the other seasons of the author's residence (P. Gilbert *in litt.*) and when conditions at Itawa were probably too wet to favour the Corncrakes' residence. Arrival was late (27 December) and no Corncrakes were seen from 31 December 1977 to 24 February 1978, when a temporary influx occurred; these birds soon departed, the last being seen on 11 March.

Thus it appears that local movements of the wintering population may take place, probably in response to changing local conditions. The only other suitable habitat in the Itawa area was at the edge of Ndola airport, some 1.8 km SSE of the study area, but it was not possible to ascertain whether Corncrakes ever occurred there. Studies (pers. obs.) in Zambia and Kenya show that other species of crakes are itinerant in their non-breeding areas but that this behaviour is, predictably, more pronounced in wet-habitat species such as the Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*, Lesser Spotted (Baillon's) Crake *P. pusilla* and Striped Crake *P. [Aenigmatolimnas] marginalis* than in the Corncrake, which occurs in a drier and more stable habitat.

## GENERAL HABITS

Corncrakes are said to be quite tame but skulking and to often occur out of cover (Cramp & Simmons 1980). At Itawa they were occasionally seen feeding in the open on narrow paths through the grassland and at the edges of leterite roads, but they were much more skulking than the African Crakes which were frequently seen in the open. If a slow and quiet approach could be made, it was sometimes possible to walk to within 10 m of a Corncrake in the open without alarming it. When surprised outside cover, the normal reaction of the bird was to run swiftly away for a few metres with neck retracted and then to

stand erect with neck stretched up and watch the intruder; this could be repeated several times. African Crakes showed very similar reactions in the same situation. If not greatly alarmed, the Corncrake would either then continue feeding or would walk off, not always seeking cover immediately and sometimes appearing curious rather than unduly nervous.

Corncrakes at Itawa were not difficult to flush from cover when located by the dog and they flew most readily from short grass; in very tall cover they were sometimes able to escape the dog by running. Most of the birds located in cover were flushed by the dog after a short search, and an observer without a dog could also flush birds from short grass. Normal escape flights were no longer than 50 m. It was not difficult to flush a bird two or three times; when thus disturbed the bird would often finally land at the edge of bushes or thickets which it would then penetrate for concealment (but from which it could still be flushed by the dog). Escape flights were also made around thickets, the bird landing on the opposite side to the observer.

Most visits to the Itawa grassland were made from 05:30 to 07:00 and from 17:30 to 19:00 local time. Corncrakes were found to be active from 10 to 15 min after first light and to cease activity at about dusk; they were not encountered before dawn or after dark despite attempts to locate them at these times. This contrasts with behaviour on the breeding grounds, where they may be active during the night (Witherby *et al.* 1941). Unlike the African Crake, which shows greater activity in the morning than the evening (Taylor *in prep.*), the Corncrakes showed no significant difference in morning and evening activity: combining results from all sites, the percentage of successful visits (i.e. when Corncrakes were seen) in the mornings was 47 per cent, in the evenings 50 per cent ( $P > 0.8$ ,  $\chi^2$  test). Occasional visits made between 07:30 and 17:30 produced no sightings after 10:00 but it is not known whether all activity ceased during the hottest parts of the day. Drizzle or light rain did not appreciably affect activity, but birds were not active during or just after heavy rain.

#### VOICE

Corncrakes are said to be silent in Africa (McLachlan & Liversidge 1978) and only once was one heard to call at Itawa: a bird surprised in the open flew off immediately with a loud and rather thrush-like *tsuck* call. This may be a stress call similar in nature to the loud *kip* call of the African Crake (Taylor *in prep.*). The only similar call recorded for the Corncrake in the Palaearctic is a *ki* or *kah*, said to be "much like the monosyllabic note of other crakes" (Witherby *et al.* 1941).

#### FOOD AND FEEDING HABITS

Although at times occurring alongside the African Crake at Itawa, no instances of interspecific aggression were observed and the two species appeared to co-exist amicably. This suggests that they are not in direct competition for food and, although their diets are similar (e.g. Cramp & Simmons 1980, Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1957, Ripley 1977), the longer heavier bill of the African Crake (measurements in, for example Ripley 1977 and *pers. obs.*) suggests that different sized food items may be taken and/or that different feeding methods may be used.

It was not possible to establish the range of food items taken by these species at Itawa and birds of both species feeding (never together) in open areas appeared to be taking a variety of invertebrate and vegetable matter.



The African Crake has been seen to dig and probe with its bill (Taylor in prep.) but this behaviour is not recorded for the Corncrake by Cramp & Simmons (1980).

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## FURTHER ADDITIONS TO THE BIRD FAUNA OF RWANDA

Jean-Pierre Vande weghe

Since 1969 I have lived in Kigali, Rwanda and have been able to spend considerable time in the field. As many parts of the country, especially the eastern rangelands and the Akagera National Park, had been subject to only limited ornithological investigation before that time, I have been able to identify a large number of species which were absent from the check-list of Schouteden (1966). Many of these new records have already been published in miscellaneous papers. The latest additions are given below.

*Circaetus gallicus* Short-toed Snake Eagle

The race *pectoralis* (the Black-chested Snake Eagle) is a breeding resident in the eastern rangelands of Rwanda, but on 3 December 1983 I watched an immature bird of the western race *beaudouini* (Beaudouin's Snake Eagle) in the Kilala plain, Akagera NP. The bird was sitting on the top of a small isolated tree and could be seen from a considerable distance because of its prominent whitish head. At close range the entire head and underside looked white with a slight buffish tinge. On the belly, especially on the sides, there were some dark markings and the neck was also a mixture of white and dark feathers. The mantle and wings were light brown, much paler than in the local race *pectoralis*, and with a slight rufous tinge.

*Butastur rufipennis* Grasshopper Buzzard

On 7 November 1981 I watched a single adult bird in the Kamakaba plain in the northern part of the Akagera NP. It was sitting on a very small termite mound in the grass and, in my car, I could approach it to within a few metres. The plumage looked in good condition, but when the bird flew away low over the ground, its flight was lop-sided and looked as if it was wounded in one wing. This record is about 150 km to the south of the southernmost record from the Rwenzori NP in Uganda (Britton 1980), but most surprising is its early date.

*Falco eleonorae* Eleonora's Falcon

On 24 January 1983 a single pale phase bird was flying south along the Akagera swamps near Kajumbura, Akagera NP. It looked at first like a large Hobby *Falco subbuteo*, but with a longer tail and long narrow wings (especially the arm wing). Its flight was very typical of this species, with slow and rather graceful wingbeats. At close range the underside appeared more buffish than that of the Hobby and the undertail coverts looked pale. The underwing was dark on the coverts, pale at the base of the flight feathers and dark again at the posterior edge.

*Francolinus shelleyi* Shelley's Francolin

The first time I came upon a covey of four birds of this species in the Akagera NP and was able to identify them with certainty, was on 10 September 1975. Since that time I have made several sightings each year, but most of my records concern birds heard in the early morning or at dusk. A bird was also seen by D.A. Turner (pers. comm.) on 9 July 1981.

I found this francolin over a large part of the Akagera NP and in the central area of the Mutara Game Reserve, up to 1.15S in the north and 30.21E in the west. I also found it further south, near the Rusuma Falls at 2.24S, 30.16E, near the Tanzanian border in extreme southeast Rwanda. Within that area this species has a very sporadic distribution. I found it on stony hills with *Loudetia simplex* grasslands and scattered combretaceous bushes or trees between 1400 and 1750 m above sea level. I found it also in the very open

*Themeda-Hyparrhenia* grasslands of the higher plateaux in the central areas of the Akagera NP at between 1500 and 1825 m.

Over nearly all of its distribution area in eastern Rwanda this francolin is sympatric with the Red-winged Francolin *F. levaillantii*, which is far more numerous. Shelley's Francolin keeps more to rocky or stony places with less luxuriant grass cover, but with a quite dense woody vegetation, while the Red-winged is most abundant in very open lush, long grasses or on the shorter grasslands of the central plateau of the Akagera NP. Their ecological separation, however, is not complete and in some areas both species occur on exactly the same ground. On the other hand, the Red-winged Francolin completely avoids the driest parts of Akagera NP while it extends its range on to the mountain grasslands of the high rainfall areas of western and northern Rwanda.

The discovery of this Rwandan population of Shelley's Francolin gives more support to the isolated single record (of three birds) from southern Uganda (Britton 1980). Obviously this Rwanda population extends into the Ankole region, and perhaps also to the other side of the Akagera River in Karagwe, extreme northwestern Tanzania.

*Fringillus streptophorus* Ring-necked Francolin

On 29 September 1980, on the ridge of Kiyonza Hill in the southern part of the Akagera NP, I flushed two francolins which I had never seen before in Rwanda. Subsequently I came upon these birds several times, but until July 1981 I was unable to identify them with certainty. Finally I had good views of a single bird, calling from a stone on 6 July 1981, and was able to identify it as a Ring-necked Francolin. A few days later, on 11 July, D.A. Turner (pers. comm.) also had good views of a single bird about 3 km north of Akagera Hotel, and flushed two more later on the same day. Since that time I have seen this species regularly.

The distribution of the Ring-necked Francolin appears to be restricted in Akagera NP to Kiyonza Hill, a steep stony ridge about 12 km long and a few hundred metres wide. The centre of this area is at about 1.40S, 30.43E. Curiously, the species is totally absent from many other similar hills north and south of Kiyonza. Its habitat is a *Loudetia* grassland, interspersed with many stones and rock outcrops, and with quite a dense woody cover of isolated combretaceous bushes and small trees or dry thickets, situated at about 1500 m.

On the same hill and in the same habitat I have also seen Shelley's Francolin, the Coqui Francolin *F. coqui*, the Red-necked Spurfowl *F. afer* and, very rarely, the Red-winged Francolin. The Ring-necked Francolin usually occurs in isolated pairs or in small coveys of up to six birds. When approached on foot, it remains very quiet and can only be flushed once, usually from about five or six metres.

*Numenius arquata* Curlew

On 28 December 1981 a single bird was found on a small rocky island in a bay of Lake Kivu near Kibogora, between Kibuye and Cyangugu. This is the first record for Rwanda, but the species is an annual visitor to the Rusizi Plain on the Zaire-Burundi border (pers. obs., Gaugris 1979).

*Sterna caspia* Caspian Tern

A single bird was observed on about 1 November 1981 by N. Monfort-Braham, K. Stuart and A. Harcourt on Lake Hago, Akagera NP (pers. comm.).

*Glaucidium capense* Barred Owlet

On 31 August 1981 a bird of this species was found sitting in the crown of a leafless tree on the edge of a narrow dry gully thicket, being mobbed by

small passerines, at Kitabiri Hill in the Akagera NP. It looked decidedly larger than the Pearl-spotted Owlet *G. perlatus*, and its barred upperside and breast were conspicuous.

Since that time I have tried to find the species again in the same general area by playing-back its recorded voice at night. This method is very successful with other species of the same genus and always results in a rapid response when the target species is present in the area. The fact that I have never obtained any response with *capense* is, in my opinion, an indication that this species is not a resident in eastern Rwanda.

*Andropadus virens* Little Greenbul

On 28 August 1982 I found this species in a small but dense patch of riverine forest along the Akagera, about 2 km south of Kagitumba in the extreme north of Akagera NP. At least four different birds were seen. They were members of a mixed party involving Yellow-whiskered Greenbuls *A. latirostris*, Leaf-loves *Phyllastrephus scandens* and Olive Mountain Greenbuls *P. placidus* among many other passerines. This is my first record from Rwanda, but I know the species very well from eastern Zaire.

*Ficedula albicollis* Collared Flycatcher

This species is a common and sometimes abundant migrant in eastern Rwanda from mid September to early November. Most of the birds are then in winter plumage and their racial identification is not possible. Britton (1980a) refers to my paper on Palaearctic migrants in Rwanda (Vande weghe 1979) and reports that the nominate race is "common on autumn passage". This is a misinterpretation, for I did not write about racial identification in that paper. I stated that the first arrivals include some males still carrying extensive remnants of summer plumage, and in fact the only bird of whose racial identification I am sure was a nominate male, seen on 26 September 1980 on Kiyonza Hill in the Akagera NP. Another male of the nominate race was seen on 5 October 1978 near Kigwena in southern Burundi. This bird was mentioned, without subspecific quotation, in a paper on birds of Burundi (Gaugris et al. 1981).

Spring migration is much more discrete. In dry years there are usually no records at all, but in wet years (e.g. 1971, 1978, 1983 and 1984) I have made sightings over several days in mid March. Among these birds some are already in breeding plumage and racially identifiable. The birds seen on 14 March 1971 and on 13 March 1978 (Vande weghe 1979) were most probably *semitorquata*, but two or three males seen between 14 and 21 March 1984 in gardens in Kigali were definitely of this race.

*Nectarinia pulchella* Beautiful Sunbird

On 21 August 1981 I watched a pair about 3 km south of Kagitumba (Uganda border) in the extreme north of the Akagera NP. The birds were actively flying around and displaying in open *Acacia polyacantha* woodland close to the river. The male had elongated tail feathers and yellow pectoral tufts, but was not in full breeding plumage. The red breast patch showed some dull feathers, as did the metallic green of the head and mantle. The belly was greenish and the bird obviously belonged to the nominate race. As this sunbird has been found in Ankole, Uganda (Britton 1980), its occurrence in northeastern Rwanda is not too surprising; but as I have seen it only once in 15 years, it must be extremely rare or perhaps only a straggler.

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## XIX CONGRESSUS INTERNATIONALIS ORNITHOLOGICUS

### Second Announcement

The XIX International Ornithological Congress will take place in Ottawa, Canada, from 22 to 29 June 1986. Prof. Dr Klaus Immelmann (West Germany) is President and Dr Henri Ouellet (Canada) is Secretary General. The programme is being planned by an international Scientific Programme Committee chaired by Prof. J. Bruce Falls (Canada). The programme will include plenary lectures, symposia, contributed papers (spoken and posters), and films. There will be a mid-congress free day. Pre- and post-congress excursions and workshops are planned in various interesting ornithological regions of Canada.

Information and requests for application forms should be addressed to:

Dr Henri Ouellet  
Secretary General  
XIX Congressus Internationalis Ornithologicus  
National Museum of Natural Sciences  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0M8

'Pre-registration' should be made by 30 November 1984.

STREAKY-BREASTED PYGMY CRAKE *SAROTHRURA BOEHMI*:

## FIRST DOCUMENTED RECORDS FOR TANZANIA

N.E. Baker, A.J. Beakbane &amp; E.M. Boswell

During the early morning of 15 May 1982 two female Streaky-breasted Pygmy Crakes *Sarothrura boehmi* were caught at Kilima tea factory (8.36S, 35.22E) in the Mufindi District of the Southern Highlands of Tanzania.

The factory, at an altitude of 2005m, lies close to the escarpment edge of the Uzungwa Mountains. It is situated on a ridge overlooking a major valley where the escarpment runs almost east to west. The lights of the factory are used throughout the year and it has been known for sometime that migrant birds are attracted to them during nights of low cloud. Indeed, a list in MS of local species (Padget-Wilkes 1965) includes 'Boehm's Crane' but without supporting evidence or dates.

Additional lighting and manning of the factory during 1983 and 1984 resulted in the capture of a further six birds with other known Afrotropical migrants which will be documented in a future *Scopus* (Beakbane & Boswell in prep.). Full mensural data of the eight birds are given in Table 1. The male bird caught in May 1983 died and was presented to the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Tring, where it is registered B.M. Reg. No. 1983-7-1.

TABLE 1

*Mensural data (g and mm) of live S. boehmi at Mufindi*

Date	Ring No.	Sex	Weight	Wing	Tarsus	Middle Toe	Culmen
15 May 82	A40001	F	-	87	25.8	23.0	11.8 (F)
	A40002	F	-	85	25.6	21.5	11.4 (F)
5 May 83	1983-7-1	M	42	91	24.35	22.63	13.80
2 May 84	A47107	F	35	85	21.89	23.54	13.04
3 May 84	A47108	M	38.5	86	21.92	22.03	13.17
	A47109	M	33.5	91	22.36	22.81	12.95
5 May 84	A47240	M	35	91	25.98	22.94	15.60
5 Jun 84	A47117	F	30.5	86	23.33	23.40	14.16

In 'Culmen' column, (F) indicates that the measurement was to the feathers

Weights were taken with a 'long' 50-g Pesola balance to 0.5g. Bird A47117 at 30.5g was extremely thin and had a very prominent sternum. Wing measurements were taken with a steel stopped-end rule to obtain 'maximum length' - the method 3 of Svensson (1975); they are therefore slightly longer than those taken from museum skins. Tarsus measurements were taken from the notch on the back of the intertarsal joint to the upper base of the three forward toes. This method differs significantly from that used by Keith, Benson & Irwin (1970) who used the lower base of the hind toe that forms a spur in this species. Generally our field measurements are approximately 3mm longer than those of Keith et al. (1970). It is interesting to note that McLachlan & Liversidge (1978) give a 'short' tarsus of 18-19.5mm yet Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1957) give a 'long' one of 21-24mm. Middle toe measurements were taken from the tip of the claw to the base of the toe as detailed in Keith et al. (1970) and all claws were checked for irregularities. The culmen was measured

to the base of the skull except where stated otherwise in Table 1. A standard vernier caliper measuring to 0.1mm was used in 1982 while a Jocal digital vernier, reading to 0.01mm was used in the other two years.

*Sarothrura boehmi* closely resembles the Red-chested Pygmy Crake *S. rufa* but differs most conspicuously in the reduced extent of chestnut on the head and neck of the male. The longer wing is of importance in separating this presumably migratory species from more sedentary and closely related ones. The short middle toe is also of importance in separating it from the longer toed *Sarothrura* species that prefer a damper habitat (Keith et al. 1970). The relevant measurements of similar species are given in Table 2. Those for the specimen (1983-7-1) were kindly taken from the skin by Mr P. Colston using museum rather than field techniques. They therefore bear direct comparison with those from Keith et al. (1970); all other measurements are taken from their paper and refer to male birds.

TABLE 2  
Comparative measurements (mm) of males  
of three species of *Sarothrura*

	Wing	Tarsus	Middle Toe
<i>S. rufa</i>	67 - 80	18 - 23	25 - 32
<i>S. lugens</i>	71 - 82	19 - 22.5	24 - 29
<i>S. boehmi</i>	82 - 88	18.5 - 21.5	19 - 23
1983-7-1	88	20	23

Moult details were taken from three Mufindi birds but no clear picture emerges. They appeared to be in suspended wing moult with a mixture of new and old feathers, all full-grown. However, A47117 appeared to have eight missing flight feathers from the left wing and two missing from the right. A40002 had primaries 1 and 2 new and full-grown, the rest older, more faded and slightly worn. Secondaries 2 and 3 appeared new while others seemed old, some more obviously worn than others. Contour feather wear in females was more obvious than in males. In particular, A40002 had reduced and faded white feather tips which did not therefore form the distinct white bars as illustrated in Keith et al. (1970).

It was noted that all captive birds were exhausted, far more so than other species being caught in similar circumstances. They were extremely thirsty, drinking water at the first opportunity upon release, even taking dew from a lawn for several minutes before running into cover. Later birds were fed on water and dissolved glucose, taking a teaspoonful, which revived them significantly.

It is difficult to prove in which direction these birds were travelling. The species is known to breed in Central Africa, with egg laying in January, February and March and there are Kenya records of birds in breeding condition in May and June (Britton 1980). It therefore seems likely that they were moving northwards after breeding and that at least some (early breeders?) start their moult before departing from their breeding quarters.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Mr Peter Colston for confirming our identification of the male bird and providing measurements from the skin; Mzee Mohamed Nawa for friendly assistance at the site and Mr Stuart Keith for helpful comments on an earlier draft.

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- N.E. Baker, Box 5272, Dar es Salaam, A.J. Beakbane, Box 40, Mufindi and E.M. Boswell, Box 23, Mufindi, Tanzania

(Received 30 July 1984)

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The undersigned are investigating the question of host selection in two *Clamator* cuckoos in Africa, namely Striped or Levaillant's Cuckoo *C. levaillantii* and Jacobin or Black and White Cuckoo *C. jacobinus* (races *pica* and *serratus*). We are interested to know the whereabouts, if any, of preserved skins of nestlings or fledglings of either species which record their host species. Whereas *C. levaillantii* parasitizes babblers of the genus *Turdoides* probably exclusively, we are anxious to confirm whether or not *C. jacobinus* sometimes parasitizes babblers anywhere in Africa. The best proof of this would be the existence of preserved material. We are conversant with the literature, both old and new, which gives general statements or specific examples of parasitism by *C. jacobinus pica* with *Turdoides* babblers in East and northeastern Africa. As far as we know these records have been based either on blue eggs found in babblers' nests or on sight records of young *Clamator* cuckoos being fed by these hosts. Notwithstanding the fact that *C. jacobinus* commonly parasitizes babblers in India we feel that positive proof is lacking that this cuckoo does so anywhere in Africa.

We would be grateful if curators of collections which contain skins of young *Clamator* cuckoos would re-examine their material and, others who may have field information, would report their findings to the first-named.

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# BREEDING OF THE ETHIOPIAN SWALLOW *HIRUNDO AETHIOPICA* IN INTERIOR KENYA

*Lavinia Grant & Adrian D. Lewis*

The Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica* (hereafter called the 'swallow') is a resident of the Afrotropical region that occurs across the northern tropics from Niger and Benin to Ethiopia and Somalia and thence southwards to East Africa (Hall & Moreau 1970). It has been extending its range southwards into East Africa during recent decades. Thus Jackson (1938) noted it south along the Nile valley to Kajo Kagi (3.53N, 31.40E) on the southern borders of the Sudan, but could find only three records for interior Kenya and none at all for Uganda. Since then, however, numerous sight records have shown its advance south to the equator in Uganda and to eastern areas of Tanzania, south to 10 degrees South (East African Natural History Society (EANHS) Nest Record card, Britton 1980, Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.). Since all but one of the few breeding records for the interior of East Africa are on substantial buildings (Benson 1945, EANHS Nest Record cards, pers. obs.), this extension southwards may have been due, at least in part, to the increased use of relatively large and permanent, European-style buildings, on which nests can be built in relatively inaccessible situations.

It has been known for many years as a breeding species along the Kenya coast (e.g. records in Cunningham-van Someren 1971), while more recent observations detail its breeding under coral overhangs, on buildings and inside sea caves (EANHS Nest Record cards, Dyson 1971, Lee 1971, Brown & Britton 1980). Association with similar structures, and breeding on or near the coast, is also known from southern Somalia at latitudes 1 to 3 degrees N (Ash & Miskell 1983) and from interior eastern Tanzania at 3 and 10 degrees S (EANHS Nest Record cards).

Less is known about its status in the interior of Kenya. It has been observed in many parts of the country north of the equator and this population may be discrete from that on the coast (Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.). The sole breeding records for these areas appear to be those of Benson (1945) who, in 1941, observed it inside European houses at Moyale (3.32N, 39.03E) on 11 March, at occupied nests at Marsabit (2.17N, 37.57E) in late May and at an occupied nest attached to an overhanging rock at a waterhole at Archer's Post (0.39N, 37.41E) on 21 May.

In the course of researches associated with the Kenya bird atlas (Lewis & Pomeroy in prep.), LG reported regular nesting of the species on her house at El Karama Ranch, Laikipia District (0.12N, 36.55E, 1740 m). This paper summarizes these new records from Laikipia and describes aspects of the breeding biology. All observations derive from the farm buildings at El Karama Ranch. The 'study pair' use the 'study nest' in LG's living room and have received the most observation. The data are compared with those for the Eurasian Swallow *H. rustica* (Ingram 1974, Sharrock 1976, Tate 1981, Witherby et al. 1938), a member of the same superspecies (Hall & Moreau 1970) which also uses manmade structures for breeding. Data extracted from EANHS Nest Record cards filled in by H.A. & P.L. Britton, W.G. Dyson, H.J. Lee, C.F. Mann, S. Sassoon, D.A. Turner and V.G.L. van Someren are acknowledged as 'EANHSNRC'.

## THE BREEDING IN THE EL KARAMA AREA

The swallow has been at least attempting to breed at El Karama since 1969,

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when LG came to live there. Successful breeding was taking place in 1977 when more concerted observation of the birds began, and probably before that. Although quantitative data are lacking, the numbers of pairs and their overall breeding success have shown a steady increase up to the present day, which may reflect the species' continued southward spread and/or the expansion of the successful El Karama population.

In the stables, the swallow has largely replaced the White-rumped Swifts *Apus caffer*, Little Swifts *A. affinis*, Striped Swallows *Hirundo abyssinica* and Mosque Swallows *H. senegalensis* that bred there formerly, and it is spreading to other buildings on the farm. Although they may do so, the swallows have never been seen to exhibit aggression towards any of these other species, in fact quite the reverse. Little Swifts, which were not occupying any nest in the immediate vicinity, caused the death of a swallow brood by chasing the parents so persistently that they deserted, and knocked a nestling out of the nest. This nest is, however, now being used successfully by swallows.

The conditions and habitat at El Karama are by no means unique and it would be surprising if other colonies do not exist elsewhere on the Laikipia plateau. We have received several reports of breeding from the area between Rumuruti, Nanyuki and Maralal, but have not been able to confirm any of them personally.

#### SONG AND THE INITIATION OF NESTING

Prior to normal 'long' rains breeding, the birds start to sing in January and may continue for a long period before nest building begins. The full song may be given in flight, but is more frequently uttered from a perch. Song ceases before hatching and does not resume, at least in the study pair, before the second clutch. As noted by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960) the song is loud and as remarkably varied as that of a canary *Serinus* sp., consisting of long and sustained periods of constantly varied but fairly similar phrases. The notes are squeaky but melodious, not of a great range of frequency but nevertheless very pleasant to the ear. A very quiet and introspective, but otherwise fully developed, version of the song given by a solitary, perched bird was apparently a subsong, or possibly the soft twittering of the female mentioned by Archer & Godman (1961).

After song begins, in some cases long after, the pair brings more lining materials to a pre-existing nest and roosts near it or, in the case of a new site, near the place where they intend to build. At the Kenya coast, a pair intermittently perched near an old nest from mid February onwards, with incubation starting on 1 April (EANHSNRC). Although there is always some wet mud around the farmhouse at El Karama, building only begins with the onset of wet weather, as noted for several members of this genus by Brown & Britton (1980); this is presumably because, regardless of the constant presence of nest material due to domestic water, only widespread rain will stimulate the production of sufficient insect prey. This is usually during the April-July 'long' rains, but breeding may occur at other times as, for example, during the unseasonal rains of January 1983; prolonged unseasonal rain in September 1983 did not promote breeding, however. Nests may be built and then remain unused if the weather becomes unfavourable, while some nests can even remain unused when breeding is successfully underway in the rest of the colony.

#### THE COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF THE NEST

The nests are built of sticky wet mud pellets reinforced with dry grass. The

structure is an open cup and building is started at the base, and thence up the sides to form a horseshoe shape, which is finally walled-in across the front. As in the Eurasian Swallow (Tate 1981), most building activity occurs in the morning, which enables the construction to dry and harden in the heat of the day to prevent collapse. Higher overall temperatures must render this factor less important in the tropics, however, and some building is also seen at El Karama in the afternoons. The nest is then lined with rootlets, dry grass, hair from horses and cattle and with feathers, these materials being identical to those used by the Eurasian Swallow (Tate 1981). At the Kenya coast, coconut fibre, palm leaf fibre and possibly seaweed are also used (EANHSNRC). One bird at El Karama carried a hair approximately one metre long; this material can be a source of young mortality, as for example when an immature was hanged by its neck below its nest in a loop of hair, and when another flying young was hobbled to its nest by a strand around its legs.

The constituents of a failed nest were analysed. This nest was rather larger than average for this species at El Karama: its open, roughly circular top measured 10 x 8 cm and it was 13 cm deep, its overall shape being an inverted cone, flattened on the side on which it was attached, unsupported, on to the side of a vertical beam. The cemented part of this nest consisted of soil material ranging in grain size from mud (below 0.15 mm) to a few rock grains over 3.35 mm in diameter, together with vegetable material that was predominantly dry grass and rootlets. Inside this was an outer 'foundation' lining consisting of dry grass, rootlets and a very few down feathers, the outer parts of this material being cemented into the inner side of the nest's mud wall. As its name implies, this foundation lining seems to provide a firm support within the nest for the more fragile inner lining. This outer lining is absent in nests built on wooden shelves (see Nest building and situation, below), where the shelf itself provides a competent, horizontal foundation. This outer lining enclosed an inner one of dry grass, feathers and hair that surrounded an open cup 4 cm in diameter. The composition of the inner lining, in terms of numbers of constituent particles, was approximately 75 per cent pieces of dry grass over 2 cm long, 12 per cent feathers over 2 cm long, 8 per cent rootlets, 4 per cent animal hair and 1 per cent twine, human hair and shreds of plastic sacking.

The feathers were all from the feral chicken, and analyses of two other nests showed 93 per cent from this species and the remainder from the Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*, domestic pigeons *Columba livia* and the White-bellied Go-away Bird *Corythaixoides leucogaster*, and 94 per cent this species and the remainder from domestic goose, Helmeted Guineafowl and a roller *Coracias* sp., respectively. This preference for chicken feathers has previously been noted for this species (EANHSNRC) and for Eurasian Swallow (Tate 1981), and presumably reflects abundance around the farm and other rural buildings on which these two birds breed. The Eurasian Swallow has a great preference for white feathers (Tate 1981), possibly because their colour makes them more conspicuous and easily found, but in two analysed nests at El Karama only 51 per cent and 63 per cent respectively of the feathers over 2 cm long were mainly this colour; relining of a nest with white feathers is described at the Kenya coast (EANHSNRC).

#### NEST BUILDING AND SITUATION

Nest building is undertaken by both members of the pair as in the Eurasian Swallow (Witherby *et al.* 1938) and is accomplished in about two weeks. At Entebbe, Uganda, the mud structure alone of a nest was constructed in five days (EANHSNRC). During building, either one or both members of the pair may

roost on the nest at night: this behaviour appears irregular and unpredictable and cannot be correlated either with the amount of the nest completed or with the prevailing weather conditions.

At El Karama, new nests have never been built on top of old ones as is often the case in the Eurasian Swallow (Ingram 1974), but old nests of other *Hirundo* and *Apus* species have been used as foundations for complete new nests. At the Kenya coast, one course of mud was added to an old nest that was about to be reused (EANHSNRC), and broken nests at El Karama have been repaired before re-use. The swallows also clean and reline old nests before use and any nest, whether old or new, before the production of a second brood; cleansing prior to a second brood has also been recorded on the Kenya coast (EANHSNRC). These measures presumably serve to reduce parasite infestation.

The nests are either built inside buildings, e.g. in the stables and living quarters, or in sheltered situations on buildings' exteriors, e.g. under eaves and at the back of verandahs. The birds are characteristically tame (see, for example Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1960), but react to domestic cats and dogs as soon as nest building has started. No nests have been found on natural structures, such as trees. In contrast to the habit of the Eurasian Swallow (Ingram 1974), the nests are mostly unsupported from below, and are built on surfaces that range from vertical to approximately 60 degrees above the horizontal, e.g. the vertical sides of roof beams and the undersides of sufficiently inclined roofs; nests can also be attached to free-dangling structures, e.g. a decorative raffia mat, and a bark sliver hanging from the underside of a wooden roof tile. Nests supported from below are rarer. Thus the study nest is at the junction of two walls and supported below by the picture rail, while a number of nests are supported by shelves erected on the verandah specifically for this purpose. Nesting at the Kenya coast occurred in an old coconut shell, also hung up specifically for the purpose (EANHSNRC).

#### THE EGGS

Clutch size varies from two to four, with possibly only a single egg at times, and two broods per season are usual. This compares to 14 clutches from the Kenya coast which averaged 2.7 (50 per cent of the sample = C3), but is slightly below the C3 or C4 or sometimes more quoted by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960) and the four clutches averaging 3.75 quoted by Archer & Godman (1961) for Somalia. In the study nest, one egg per day was laid until the clutch of four was complete, when incubation began.

An egg measured 18 x 13 mm, which compares to 18.03 x 13.08 mm quoted for Nigeria (Jackson 1938), 19 x 12.5 mm (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1960, area unspecified), and 17.5 x 13.5 mm for Somalia (Archer & Godman 1961). The eggs are white tinged very faintly pink, with chestnut blotches and speckles of varying intensity which are concentrated in a poorly defined band around the blunt end and more thinly distributed over the rest of it. This colouration and patterning agrees with published descriptions, and to the eggs of other members of the superspecies (National Museum collection, Nairobi, Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1960).

#### INCUBATION AND BROODING

Incubation takes around two weeks (Table 1), which is very similar to the 14-16 days of the Eurasian Swallow (Tate 1981). The individual birds of the study nest pair can be recognized by minor plumage differences, and in this pair one bird carries out at least the bulk of incubation and brooding while

the other roosts elsewhere. Recent colour marking of one of this pair confirms this conclusion. If analogy with the Eurasian Swallow (Witherby *et al.* 1938, Tate 1981) is correct, it is the male that takes little part in these activities, but the sexes of the birds at El Karama cannot be distinguished. Whether hatching is simultaneous or sequential is uncertain, but the young are ready to leave the nest together.

### THE YOUNG

The young are fed initially on material regurgitated by the parents and later on small flying insects held in the parents' bills. The parents do not always feed the chick that gapes widest or cries loudest, and may persistently push others aside to reach ones obscured at the back of the nest.

The young are fed almost continuously from dawn to dusk and, as in the Eurasian Swallow (Witherby *et al.* 1938), both parents assist; feeding becomes more intermittent, i.e. with the parents absent for periods of up to 30 min, if unseasonal dry weather, and thus paucity of food, occurs after hatching, as in June 1984. On 12 June 1983, the study nest young received ten feeds between 06:10 and 06:35, which is within the feeding rate quoted for the Eurasian Swallow in Germany (Tate 1981), and both parents arrived at the nest simultaneously on a number of occasions. This pair still brings food after the oil lamps are lit at dusk.

The parents swallow some faecal sacs and remove others. They continue to remove sacs from the nest even after the young, at about one week old, are able to back over the edge of the nest to defaecate normally. Sacs from the study nest are carried over 10m away, and are invariably deposited outside the house.

For some days before flying, the young cling to the edge of the nest. Three of four young left the study nest 25 days after hatching, which is slightly longer than the 17 - 23 days quoted for the Eurasian Swallow (Tate 1981). The fourth chick of this brood left the nest, possibly accidentally, at 21 days, when it could certainly fly, but was killed by a domestic cat. Dated events for this brood are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1

*Dated breeding phenomena at the study nest, 1983*

	Running days	Cumulative days
5 May: C4 completed and incubation started	13	0
18 May: first egg (possibly all eggs) hatched	6	13
24 May: first audible sounds from chicks	15	19
8 June: first nestling flew - killed by cat	4	34
12 June: other three flew successfully	18	38
30 June: first egg of second clutch laid	-	56

Most young at El Karama fledge and fly in June and July, after normal 'long' rains. After their first flight and as in the Eurasian Swallow (Witherby *et al.* 1938), the young spend the nights roosting on or beside their nest for a week or possibly longer, though records from the Kenya coast suggest that this may not always be the case (EANHNRNC). While there is no certain evidence for the co-operative feeding of the young by the immatures of earlier broods, as there is in a few cases in the Eurasian Swallow (Tate 1981),

immature birds can show an interest in later broods. Three free-flying immatures persistently perched near, and showed an interest in, a brood still in the study nest; the study pair persistently chased these immatures away from the nest but would perch normally with them away from the vicinity of the nest. When the brood flew, these immatures flew around with the parents, calling to them.

#### BEHAVIOUR OUTSIDE THE BREEDING SEASON

After the breeding season the swallows remain in the broad vicinity of the colony, and there is no noticeable diminution in numbers to suggest even limited dispersal or migration. They spend the days feeding out over the surrounding bush, particularly the more open areas, and return at dusk to roost on or near the nests. The study nest pair roosted at precisely the same site near their nest and in the same positions relative to each other throughout the non-breeding season, while their progeny roosted elsewhere.

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THE DISTRIBUTION OF, AND OTHER NOTES ON,  
SOME BIRDS OF TANZANIA - PART II

N.R. Fuggles-Couchman

The first part of this paper appeared in *Scopus* in March this year (Fuggles-Couchman 1984) and the following notes should be read in the context of the introduction to that part. As this paper is intended to focus attention on apparent gaps in the information on the distribution of some birds in Tanzania, in order to save space other notes have been kept to a minimum.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

Numbers in brackets following reference to specimens are identification numbers of skins deposited at the British Museum (Natural History).

*Coracias naevia* Rufous-crowned Roller

In view of the few records of this species from Tanzania (Britton 1980) it is worth noting its occurrence in the Wahoga area, south of Usa in Arusha District, at 1200 m, in February 1943. Other records from Kongwa, December 1947 and May 1949, Kilingali, February 1952, and from between Itigi and Tabora in May 1956, can be added to the scattered records mentioned by Britton (1980).

*Coracias spatulata* Racquet-tailed Roller

This uncommon species was recorded only once, in miombo to the west of the Uluguru Mountains, in Morogoro District, in April 1938.

*Eurystomus glaucurus* Broad-billed Roller

In addition to numerous records from the Eastern Region, all in September to November, one bird was seen at Lengopiron, in the Crater Highlands, in vestigial forest at 2500 m in February 1945.

*Upupa epops* Hoopoe

Britton (1980) states that this species is occasional in Dar es Salaam in April to June. It has also been recorded there, in well-treed areas, calling freely in November and December, and birds have been seen in January. Other records are from Morogoro District in July 1931, and from the north of Kilosa, at Kibedya and Idibo, in August 1932. Adults were watched feeding young at a nest in a rotten branch of an *Albizzia* sp. at Monduli on 4 December 1942.

*Phoeniculus minor* Abyssinian Scimitarbill

The range given by Britton (1980) lacks sufficient definition in NE Tanzania, where it occurs widely from the Hanang area at Katesh, through Makuyuni and Masailand to Monduli and the dry acacia grasslands to the north of Mt Meru, to Ngare Nairobi and southeast to Gonja at the foot of the South Pare Mountains.

*Bycanistes brevis* Silvery-cheeked Hornbill

This species was common in the evergreen lowland forest on the Ruvu River at Kibungo, at the eastern foot of the Ulugurus at 430 m, where R.E. Moreau and the author watched a male in September 1937 collecting material, presumably for lining a nest. A single bird appeared in Government House grounds in Dar es Salaam in July 1955, and was seen regularly until September that year. It has also been recorded from Mahenge in May 1952.

*Tockus erythrorhynchus* Red-billed Hornbill

The range given by Britton (1980) should be extended eastwards from Kiliman-

jaro to include the semi-arid country to the east of the South Pare Mountains and northwest of the West Usambaras, where it was recorded in June 1942.

*Lybius diadematus* Red-fronted Barbet

While Britton refers to this species as a rather uncommon bird, in Masailand Elliott (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946) found it the commonest barbet of the vast area of the Masai steppe, and widely distributed there. In the south it reached Kilosa District, to the east of Dodoma, where it was seen in December 1952. This defines rather more precisely the range given by Britton (1980) to the south and east.

*Lybius lacrymosus* Spotted-flanked Barbet

A record from Ngulu at the southern foot of the North Pare Mountains in June 1942 lies somewhat to the east of the general range given by Britton (1980). A female (46/41) of the race *ruahae* was collected on the edge of gallery forest on the northern slopes of Mt Hanang in February 1946.

*Lybius melanopterus* Brown-breasted Barbet

The range given by Britton (1980) for eastern Tanzania should be extended to include Dar es Salaam District. A female (36/6), one of three seen, was collected in January 1936 in the Mkamba area, on the southern border of the district, at 200 m, in an area of open bush and scattered trees.

*Lybius torquatus* Black-collared Barbet

In eastern Tanzania Britton (1980) gives the range as coastal, inland to Morogoro and Dodoma. That should be extended to the southeast of Morogoro to include Ulanga District, where it was seen at Kiberege in March 1933.

*Trachyphonus erythrocephalus* Red and Yellow Barbet

The description of the range of this species in Tanzania given by Britton (1980) is somewhat indefinite and it is worth noting that it is widely distributed from Lembeni, at the western foot of the North Pare Mountains, through much of the Masai steppe, to Kongwa.

*Trachyphonus usambiro* Usambiro Barbet

When a female (46/7) of this species was collected at the southern foot of Mt Hanang in February 1946, *usambiro* was still considered a race of d'Arnaud's Barbet *T. darnaudii*. At the time it was noted that the song duet was quite unlike that of *darnaudii*. D'Arnaud's Barbet is known in the Kipare language as *Muhokivuta*, a very good onomatopoeic name for it. Both birds appeared to make the first part of the call *muho* and one bird added *kivuta*. In the case of *usambiro* the duet resembled the winding of a clock with the second bird contributing *ticktock* at the end.

*Indicator variegatus* Scaly-throated Honeyguide

This species was recorded from widely scattered areas including Kibungo Forest at Morogoro (430 m) in September 1937; in vestigial forest in the Uvidunda Mts at 1700 m (male 35/31) in July 1935; forest edge at Ol Molog, NW Kilimanjaro at 1700 m (male 42/69) in December 1942 and in the depths of evergreen forest on Mt Hanang at 2000-2200 m (female 46/38) in February 1946. It was also seen in the Crater Highlands at 2100 m in January 1945 and in the South Pare Mountains at 600 m in July 1942.

*Prodotiscus regulus* Wahlberg's Honeybird

This species was found in the dry *Acacia tortilis* grasslands in the lowlands to the northeast of Mt Meru at 1400 m (male 46/64) in February 1946 and was recorded from scattered forest patches at Ol Molog at 2000 m in August 1960. These two records are worth noting, for while Britton (1980) states that there are records from the northern parts of Tanzania, no locality from the north-



east is included among those that are mentioned.

*Prodotiscus zambesiae* Eastern Honeybird

A bird, originally identified as *P. insignis ellenbecki*, was collected by M. Morgan-Davies, Park Warden of Lake Manyara National Park, in 1961. Presumably that should now be included under *zambesiae*, and provides an additional locality for the species in Tanzania. The skin was placed in the park's collection.

*Jynx ruficollis* Red-throated Wryneck

In addition to the female (38/15) collected in August 1938 at Kingolwira, this elusive species was also recorded from Nachingwea, southern Tanzania, in 1950, well to the east of Nakapanya, the eastern limit of its southern range given by Britton (1980). Another locality not mentioned by Britton is Loliondo, in north Masailand and north of the Crater Highlands, where E.G. Rowe collected a male and female in October 1931 in forest. Both skins were deposited at the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) and, together with 38/15, are the only ones of this species in that collection from Tanzania.

*Calandrella cinerea* Red-capped Lark

This species ranges to the east of Arusha (Britton 1980) and was nesting on the northwestern slopes of Kilimanjaro at Ol Molog, at 1800 m, in May 1945.

*Calandrella somalica* Rufous Short-toed Lark

The range as given by Britton (1980) "...from the Arusha area and Crater Highlands to the Athi and Kapiti plains" is insufficiently explicit and should be widened to include the northwestern slopes of Kilimanjaro to the east. In 1942-45 flocks of this species were frequent round Ngare Nairobi, up to 1700 m. Two males (42/59, 45/20) were collected in December 1942 and June 1945 respectively. Most records of this lark in northern Tanzania were of flocks, particularly in the period December to June.

*Eremopteryx leucotis* Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark

The range given by Britton (1980) should be extended eastwards from Arusha to include the lower northwestern slopes of Kilimanjaro at Ngare Nairobi, where it was recorded in June 1945. Its occurrence at Kongwa in May 1949 and at Kilingali in February 1952 should also be noted, as apparently extending the range in the Central and Eastern Regions of Tanzania.

*Mirafra africana* Rufous-naped Lark

This species was recorded in scattered scrub and thorn grassland near Dodoma township in January 1954, a locality that lies outside the ranges for the races *tropicalis* and *transvaalensis* given by Britton (1980). The bird was probably attributable to the race *tropicalis* as that western race is shown as ranging to Singida and Iringa, and this species was never recorded west of Kidugallo, the western limit of the range given for the race *transvaalensis*.

*Mirafra africanoides* Fawn-coloured Lark

The range given by Britton (1980) for this species should be extended eastwards to include northern Kilosa District at Geiro, where it was seen in January 1952.

*Mirafra rufocinnamomea* Flappet Lark

The range given by Britton (1980) should be extended westwards to include Kilosa District where it was common in the Kiliangali area. Its flappet-flight was a constant feature of the area in November 1951.

*Hirundo abyssinica* Striped Swallow

An unusual nesting site was found at Digo Digo, Sonjo, where a nest had been applied to the underside of a branch of a fig tree, some 6 m from the ground.

The spout faced downwards at about 45 degrees, and just below the entrance was a small branch which served as a perch. The structure was well-protected from rain by its position under the branch.

*Hirundo fuligula* African Rock Martin

This species has been recorded at Masasi, southern Tanzania, at 300 m associated with houses, providing an additional low altitude locality to those mentioned by Britton (1980). On Mt Hanang it appeared round Werther Peak at 3100 m.

*Hirundo smithii* Wire-tailed Swallow

Britton (1980) remarks on the few breeding records away from man-made structures. It is therefore of interest to note a nest found on 20 January 1960 on the underside of a tree fallen across a stream. The nest of the usual type was only 60 cm above the water. The underside of the nest was a mass of hornet combs.

*Psalidoprocne albiceps* White-headed Rough-wing

In addition to the three localities in NE and E Tanzania mentioned by Britton (1980) this species has also been recorded from the road round the edge of Ngorongoro Crater, where two birds were seen at 2000 m in breaks in the forest, in August 1945; from Mt Hanang at Katesh, where a small number were hawking over a furrow in February 1946, and from the forest on the mountain and at 3200 m, where it was seen scattered over the open moorland at Werther Peak. *P. albiceps* has also been found at Lolkisale Mt and Ufiome Mt, as well as in the Sonjo area to the north of the Crater Highlands. In E Tanzania, five birds were recorded in open glades in the rain forest on the north side of the Ukagurus, north Kilosa District, at 1850 m, in December 1952.

*Psalidoprocne pristoptera* Black Rough-wing

In addition to its occurrence in the North and South Pare Mts and round Mts Kilimanjaro and Meru in NE Tanzania, this species was recorded in the Crater Highlands at Lengopiron and Nainokanoka, and at Mbulumbulu where it was nesting in September to December in 1942-44. Further south it occurred at Dareda in southern Mbulu District, and on the northern slopes of Mt Hanang on the edge of gallery forest.

*Riparia cincta* Banded Martin

In NE Tanzania this species ranges south to Mt Hanang, at Katesh, and a small flock was recorded in February 1952 at Kilingali, well to the east of the southern inland localities mentioned by Britton (1980).

*Riparia paludicola* African Sand Martin

The range given by Britton (1980) for the northern region of Tanzania should be extended south from the edge of the Crater Highlands to include Lakes Tlawi and Babati, in Mbulu District, where this species was recorded in September 1943 and February 1959 respectively, and Lake Manyara where it was seen in August 1959. Small numbers were seen near the edge of all three lakes, and at Lake Manyara the birds were in company with Eurasian Swallows *Hirundo rustica* and Banded Martins.

*Corvus albicollis* White-necked Raven

The White-necked Raven was almost the most characteristic bird around Mt Hanang in February 1946. This may have been a seasonal occurrence for, after about 45 minutes of rain, a considerable concourse of this species together with many Black Kites *Milvus migrans* congregated at 18:20 over Shesyet, on the eastern slopes of the mountain. There were at least 200 ravens, and the whole flock of ravens and kites circled round and round at some height, drifting southwards along the edge of the high eastern cliffs, to disperse after

some ten minutes, flying off to the mountain slopes.

*Corvus splendens* Indian House Crow

Colonization of the mainland at Dar es Salaam by this species would seem to have been at a much later date than that at Mombasa in Kenya. The author's first records of this species in the vicinity of Dar es Salaam were of six birds on Honeymoon Island, 4-6 km off the coast, in June 1953, and again in 1954. The first record for the mainland was not obtained until August 1958, in Dar es Salaam township, near Government House.

*Turdoides aylmeri* Scaly Chatterer

The range of this species, presumably the race *mentalis*, given by Britton (1980) should be extended northwards from Ngorongoro up the rift valley to the SE shore of Lake Natron, at Gelai (Fuggles-Couchman & Elliott 1946), and to Engaruka, where a party of four was seen in February 1945. Two birds were also seen in September 1958 50 km north of Arusha, a locality not included in the range for either the race *mentalis* or *kenianus*.

*Turdoides hypoleucos* Northern Pied Babbler

The first record of this species in Tanzania was from the semi-arid thorn bush in the extreme northwest of Kilosa District at Kibedya, where a male (34/26) was collected in June 1934. It is worth noting that this species was frequent in small parties at Kilingali, 100 km south of Kibedya, where a female (52/4) was collected in April 1952 in less arid country. It was also recorded from Mbulumbulu in May 1945, an additional locality to those given by Britton (1980) in NE Tanzania, and 100 km west of Arusha.

*Turdoides melanops* Black-lored Babbler

Britton (1980) makes no mention of this species occurring east of Tarime in west Tanzania. The range should be extended southeastwards to include the Mt Hanang area, where a female (46/59) was collected from a party of three in February 1946 near Katesh, in *Acacia tortilis* scattered tree grassland, at 1750 m. (Fuggles-Couchman 1953)

*Turdoides rubiginosus* Rufous Chatterer

This babbler was found at Mangola Springs in January 1960, a locality lying between the ranges of the races *heuglini* and *emini* as given by Britton (1980).

*Campephaga quiscalina* Purple-throated Cuckoo Shrike

Britton (1980) gives the range of the race *martini* as reaching Oldeani. It also occurred to the east of Oldeani, in the Crater Highlands at Mbulumbulu, where a female was seen in gallery forest in April 1946 at 1800 m, and it was recorded 110 km south of Oldeani on the eastern slopes of Mt Hanang on the edge of the forest, where excellent views of a male were obtained in February 1946.

*Andropadus importunus* Zanzibar Sombre Greenbul

To the localities mentioned in Britton (1980) may be added Mahenge, where a bird was heard singing in December 1951. Mahenge is 120 km south of the southern border of Kilosa District, the eastern and southern limits of the range given by Britton.

*Andropadus milanjensis* Stripe-cheeked Greenbul

Mt Monduli should be added to the localities given by Britton (1980) where this greenbul has been recorded. Birds were seen and heard singing in the forest and on the forest edges in November 1942 and October 1959. Mt Monduli is 60 km west of the Arusha NP, the western limit of the range of the race *striifacies* given by Britton.

*Chlorocichla flaviventris* Yellow-bellied Greenbul

This species was recorded from Mt Hanang in February 1946, a locality lying somewhat west of the range of the race *centralis* given by Britton (1980). A male (46/39) collected on the mountain at 2100 m was assigned to the race *occidentalis* at the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) and the record published as such (Fuggles-Couchman 1953), but a recent check has shown it to match a long series of *centralis* from Tanzania (P. Colston *in litt.*) as the ranges for the two races given by Britton (1980) would suggest it should.

*Nicator chloris* Nicator

This species was heard in full song in April 1954 in the foothills of the Uvidunda Mts, at Kidodi, Kilosa District, 45 km southwest of the Uluguru Mts, and a locality not included in the range given by Britton (1980).

*Coccypha caffra* Robin Chat

Two localities, lying apparently on, or outside, the limits of the range broadly sketched by Britton (1980) for this species, include the Uvidunda Mts, where it was collected in May 1935 (35/45) in vestigial forest at Chonwe, at 1380 m, and the North Pare Mts where it was seen in June 1942 on forest edges at Kilomeni at 1550 m.

*Irania gutturalis* Irania

The occurrence of this species at Geiro, north Kilosa, is worth recording as that locality lies to the south and east of Naberera and Dodoma respectively, the southern limits given by Britton (1980). One bird was seen on 26 December 1952 while a male (46/1) was collected in the northern foothills of Mt Meru on 17 January 1946. The southernmost record for the species in Tanzania is that provided by J.S.S. Beesley near Mbeya (EANHS OS-C 1983).

*Monticola saxatilis* Rock Thrush

A regular visitor to the Kingolwira area of Morogoro District in 1937-39 in January and February. It was also seen in February 1946 on the southern slopes of Mt Hanang up to 1800 m.

*Myrmecocichla nigra* Sooty Chat

Britton (1980) suggests that this species might occur south of Lake Victoria in Shinyanga or Mwanza. It is therefore of interest to note that it was recorded in July 1957 from Geita, 90 km southwest of Mwanza.

*Oenanthe isabellina* Isabelline Wheatear

To the few records of this species south of 4S may be added Kingolwira, where it was recorded in February 1939.

*Oenanthe lugens* Mourning Wheatear

Britton (1980) states that this species is known in Tanzania only from the Crater Highlands, Lake Manyara and Mt Meru. There is a fourth locality, the Aitcho Scarp on the Karatu-Mbulu road, some 25 km north of Mbulu township, and 50 km south of the Crater Highlands, where it was frequent in April 1959 among the rock and scrub on the scarp.

*Oenanthe pileata* Capped Wheatear

Two records are worth noting. Britton (1980) states that virtually all dated records from the lowlands of SE and NE Tanzania, and including Dar es Salaam, are for April-September. One bird recorded at Dar es Salaam was seen on 20 March 1954. At Kilingali this species was recorded up to November in 1951 when it disappeared, suddenly returning there on 13 June 1952, after the first grass burn. At Mbulumbulu, NE Tanzania, males were in full song and displaying on 10 October 1942 and one collected (42/35) had much enlarged testes.

[To be concluded]

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

SHOEBILL *BALAENICEPS REX*: A DELETION FROM  
THE KENYA AVIFAUNA

The Kenya shoreline of Lake Victoria contains ostensibly suitable habitat for Shoebills. In view of this, and the fact that between 1965 and 1971 I flew over this area repeatedly, going to and from Uganda, I was constantly asked earnestly by the ornithologist at Kenya's National Museum, Alec Forbes-Watson, to keep an eye open for the species. It so occurred that during aerial survey work along the Albert Nile in Uganda, I and a colleague photographed a Shoebill. After returning to Nairobi we were asked by Forbes-Watson if we had examined the grounds about the Yala Swamp. "Yes" said I, and handed over the photograph as Kenya's first authentic record of the species. The leg-pull was to have been revealed later in the day but, what with a more than usually convivial lunch intervening, it was not. And so 'Yala Swamp' slipped formally into the Kenya record as the only locality for this species. I now formally remove it. *Mea culpa!*

*I.S.C. Parker, Box 30678, Nairobi*

Received 1 December 1983

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RESPONSE OF A BLACKSMITH PLOVER *VANELLUS ARMATUS* TO ANTS  
ATTACKING A HATCHING EGG

Although ants are well known to be significant predators of nestlings in the tropics (Skutch 1976), little appears to have been recorded about anti-ant strategies used by parent birds. Small passerines, like the White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys sclateri* whose small nestlings I saw completely devoured by 'safari' ants *Dorylus* sp. in 15 minutes, can do nothing to protect their young, but parental behaviour can free a nest from ants as in the instance described below.

In July 1962 I had a hide at a Blacksmith Plover's nest on the Wembere in Tanzania. When I entered the hide on 12 July three eggs were pipped and the fourth was holed. About an hour later the sitting bird started showing agitation when a column of 'safari' ants began invading the nest. When the plover left the eggs I could see that ants were entering the holed egg to attack the chick inside. The parent ran round calling and making ineffectual pecks at the ants in the nest and then, suddenly, picked up the holed egg in its bill, carried it away and dropped it into shallow water some 10 m away.

With no other chicks vulnerable to attack the ants quickly vacated the nest, allowing the plover to resume incubation. The remaining three eggs hatched during the next 12 hours.

When I was let out of the hide a couple of hours later, I retrieved the dumped egg and found, as expected, that the chick was dead - whether drowned or killed by the ants I cannot say.

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THE RECORD OF THE ANGOLA WHITE-BELLIED SUNBIRD *NECTARINIA OUSTALETI*  
FROM KIGOMA IN WESTERN TANZANIA

The late C.W. Benson (1982) in his review of *Birds of East Africa*, said that he would like to see details published of the Angola White-bellied Sunbird collected at Kigoma in western Tanzania on 25 December 1961. In addition, D.C. Moyer's record of this species observed at Kasesya in southwestern Tanzania (Moyer 1983) has prompted me to record the details of the earlier bird.

It was seen in secondary growth miombo scrub on the outskirts of Kigoma township. It was first seen in flight before settling on top of a small bush where, having observed that it was not a Variable Sunbird *N. venusta* as the underparts were white, I decided to collect it. It was silent during the few moments I had it under observation. The specimen, a male, was sent to J.G. Williams at the Coryndon (now National) Museum in Nairobi on 31 December 1961; Williams confirmed the identification in his letter to me of 23 January 1962.

Despite a further visit to the area the following day, I failed to locate any other individuals of this species. As I was only on a short visit to Kigoma I am unable to comment upon its status there. However, it may well occur southwards from Kigoma to the Zambian border. Apart from the Kungwe-Mahari mountain forests, this area has been visited only rarely by ornithologists. From my experience when living at Kibondo in northwest Tanzania where I recorded a number of species previously unrecorded north of southwest Tanzania (e.g. Blue-breasted Bee-eater *Merops variegatus bangweolensis*, Black-backed Barbet *Lybius minor macclounii* and Miombo Rock Thrush *Monticola angolensis*) this may well be another instance of lack of observers.

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All contributions, which will be acknowledged, should be sent to the Editor, G.C. Backhurst, Box 24702, Nairobi, Kenya.

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*Continued inside back cover*

# SCOPUS

## THE DISTRIBUTION OF, AND OTHER NOTES ON, SOME BIRDS OF TANZANIA - PART II

(continued)

N.R. Fuggles-Couchman

### *Oenanthe pleschanka* Pied Wheatear

Britton states that the nominate race ranges into NE Tanzania, north of about 4°S. This statement overlooks published records (Fuggles-Couchman and Elliott 1946). This species was a common migrant to the whole Masai area, to within 96 km of the Central Railway, between 5° and 6°S, where a male was collected on 13 November 1942 in the Samatwa area to the south-east of Kibaya.

### *Thamnolaea arnoti* White-headed Black Chat

This species was common in *miombo* to the north of the range given by Britton (1980), reaching Msowero and Kidete, in Kilosa District, where it was regularly seen in 1932-35.

### *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris* Cliff Chat

The eastern and northern limits of the range of this species given by Britton (1980) are ill-defined, and it is worth noting its presence on the south-eastern slopes of the Uluguru Mts at Mngazi, at 1100 m, in June 1931, and near Chenzema, on the western side, in September the same year, at 2000 m. To the north, a pair was seen in August 1944 on the western Rift Wall above Mto wa Mbu, at 1400 m, and it was recorded from Mt Lolkisale in November 1958 at c. 1200 m.

### *Turdus tephronotus* Bare-eyed Thrush

In addition to the Dar es Salaam records of this species quoted by Britton (1980) it is worth noting that it was found in Tanga, in November 1945, where it frequented the grounds of the Tanga Hospital.

### *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* Great Reed Warbler

Britton (1980) mentions only two areas in Tanzania where this Palearctic migrant winters, the Lake Victoria Basin and Iringa. It has also been found wintering in NE Tanzania, at Mangola Springs, where a bird was seen on 20 January 1960. A female (45/15) was collected at Eluanata Dam on 18 April 1945, presumably on passage.

*Chloropeta natalensis* Yellow Warbler

The Yellow Warbler was recorded on the Mahenge plateau at ca. 1500 m in December 1951. That locality lies between the limits of the two races given by Britton (1980), *natalensis* in the south from Songea to Iringa, and *massaica* in the north, and east to the Uluguru Mts. The race to which the Mahenge birds belong is unfortunately unknown. This species was also recorded from rough grassland in Bukoba District in May 1956, a locality lying between Kasulu to the south and SW Uganda in the north, and presumably belonging to the race *massaica*.

*Chloropeta similis* Mountain Yellow Warbler

This species has been recorded from two localities in E Tanzania lying outside the range given by Britton (1980) for that part of the country. A female was collected in August 1937, at 1800 m in the Nguru Mts, north of the Uluguru Mts, the northern limit given for its range, and this species occurred in the northern parts of the Ukaguru Mts in December 1952, at 1850 m.

*Cisticola aberrans* Rock-loving Cisticola

This small Cisticola was recorded from the Serengeti NP in June 1962, where it frequented rocky kopjes. Presumably the bird belonged to the race *emini*, as the Serengeti lies between Mwanza and Limuru, Kenya, localities given by Britton (1980) for that race.

*Cisticola brachyptera* Siffling Cisticola

The range of the race *isabellina* in E and S Tanzania is given as extending from Morogoro to Mikindani, Songea and Ufipa (Britton 1980). It was also found to the west of Morogoro in Kilosa District. A male (34/20) was collected at Mamboya in June 1934, and birds were singing at Kilingali in February 1952.

*Cisticola brunnescens* Pectoral-patch Cisticola

The range of the race *hindei* in N Tanzania as described by Britton (1980) does not make sufficiently clear the western distribution from Mt Kilimanjaro. It is therefore thought to be worth drawing attention to the presence of this species at Ol Donyo Sambu, on the western slopes of Mt Meru, in May 1943, at 1850 m, and on the Ardai Plains, where it was in full nuptial display, and nests were found, on 9 May 1944 and 20 May 1946. This species was also noted in full nuptial display at Kongwa in May 1949, in somewhat atypical habitat, at the low altitude of 1100 m.

*Cisticola cantans* Singing Cisticola

A male (38/16) collected at Kombola, in the Nguru Mts, at 1850 m, in August 1938 was assigned to the race *pictipennis* at the British Museum (Natural History). The Nguru Mts lie outside the range given by Britton (1980) for this species but are nearly 60 km from the Uluguru Mts, the northern limit given for the race *muenzneri*, and 160 km from the Usambara Mts, the southern limit for the race *pictipennis*.

*Cisticola chubbi* Chubb's Cisticola

The race *nigriloris* extends over the border of Iringa into S Kilosa District where a male (35/36) was collected in the Uvidunda Mts at Chonwe, ca. 1400 m, in July 1935. A pair was seen in bracken and low shrubs in open grassland near the vestigial forest on the mountains. It should be noted that the Uvidunda Mts are wrongly shown in the map of Tanzania in Britton (1980) as the Ukaguru Mts, which lie in the north of Kilosa District.

*Cisticola juncidis* Zitting Cisticola

This species has been recorded well inland from the coastal lowlands of Tanzania and south to 7°S, in localities which do not appear to be included in the range described by Britton (1980) for the race *uropygialis*. Males were seen in their typical flight display at Kongwa in May 1949, and at Kilingali, Kilosa, in December 1951 and January 1952.

*Eremomela icteropygialis* Yellow-bellied Eremomela

This species has been recorded to the east of the Arusha/Longido area, the eastern limit of the range given by Britton (1980) for the race *abdominalis*. It was recorded from Ngare Nairobi in December 1942 at 1550 m, in dry *Acacia tortilis/Commiphora* sp. grassland. The north-western limit of the range given by Britton (1980) for the race *polioxantha* is not clearly defined to the west and it is worth noting that this species, presumably *polioxantha*, occurred to the north of Iringa at Kisanga in south-western Kilosa, where it was collected in too poor a state to make up a skin.

*Parisoma bohmi* Banded Parisoma

This species reaches the E Region of Tanzania in Kilosa District, somewhat to the east of the eastern limit of the range in C Tanzania at Dodoma, as given by Britton (1980). In 1932-34 it was frequent in the dry thorn bush in the Kibedya area where a male (32/15) was collected in August 1932.

*Phyllolais pulchella* Buff-bellied Warbler

The range of this species in N Tanzania should be extended westwards from Chubi in Kondo, to include the Mt Hanang area in Mbulu. It was frequently seen in small parties of up to five birds in the tops of *Acacia tortilis* at Katesh, at 1750 m, in February 1946, where a male (46/5) was collected.

*Schoenicola platyura* Fan-tailed Warbler

Britton (1980) gives the western limit of this species in NE Tanzania as the Arusha NP. That range should be extended westwards to include the Crater Highlands at Mbulumbulu, where it was uncommon in the tall *Themeda* sp. grasslands and *Veronia* sp. scrub from 1550 m to 1800 m. One bird was collected at Mbulumbulu in November 1943, but the skin was too damaged to make up.

*Myioparus plumbeus* Lead-coloured Flycatcher

Britton (1980) gives the range of the race *orientalis* in the E Region of Tanzania as inland to Morogoro. The range should be extended to Kilosa where an unsexed bird (39/7) was collected in January 1939 at Kibedya, in the north of the District.

*Erythrocerus livingstonei* Livingstone's Flycatcher

This species was recorded in a bird party in *Uapaca* woodland near Peramiho, Songea District, in April 1957. That record extends the range 280 km westwards from the western boundary of Masasi, the western limit of the range given by Britton (1980).

*Anthus cervinus* Red-throated Pipit

Britton (1980) states that numbers of this species are regular south to Mt Meru and Kilimanjaro in NE Tanzania. Elliott and Fuggles-Couchman (1948) found this pipit numerous among hundreds of *Budytes* sp. and *O. Oenanthe* in the short grass areas of Embulbul in the Crater Highlands in January 1945. They were also numerous in patchy stands of the tufted grass *Eleusine jaegeri* in the nearby grasslands. On 10 April 1946 this species appeared in some numbers round buildings at Mbulumbulu on northern passage.

*Anthus leucophrys* Plain-backed Pipit

Although Britton (1980) gives the range of the race *goodsoni* as far south as Voi, there is no mention of its occurrence in NE Tanzania. While only sight records, it is worth noting one bird seen by Elliott and Fuggles-Couchman (1948) at the foot of the western Rift Wall near Engaruka in January 1945, and two very pale pipits seen in February 1946 at 3400 m on Mt Hanang, in the open moorland, which were considered to be of this species.

*Macronyx aurantiigula* Pangani Longclaw

This species has been recorded somewhat to the south and east of the range given by Britton (1980) for NE Tanzania, at Ngulu, at the southern foot of the North Pare Mts, in June 1942. It was also seen at Katesh, at the southern foot of Mt Hanang in February 1946, well to the south of the southern limit of the range, the Lake Manyara area, given by Britton.

*Motacilla capensis* Cape Wagtail

To the few records for Tanzania, mentioned by Britton (1980) as from Kasulu and Nyarumbugu in W Tanzania, can be added one from a secluded inlet on the lake at Bukoba, in May 1956.

*Motacilla clara* Mountain Wagtail

The range described by Britton (1980) would appear to exclude the South Pare Mts where this species was recorded by a stream in the forest at Bombo at 1550 m, in June 1942. Sclater and Moreau (1932) also refer to it in the East Usambara Mts, where it shared the same stretches of water with the visiting *M. cinerea*.

*Tmetothylacus tenellus* Golden Pipit

In addition to its occurrence at Kidugallo, in Morogoro District, this species has been recorded further west at Kingolwira. Single birds were seen in cleared *miombo* in the settlement area there in 1938.

*Nilais afer* Brubru

The ranges for the races *massaica* and *minor* given by Britton (1980) appear to leave out a considerable area to the west of Kilimanjaro and the south-east of the Serengeti. Unfortunately, only sight records of this species are available from that area so that no race can be assigned to them. The species was not uncommon in suitable country around the northern foothills of Mt Meru where it was recorded in February 1945, through the scattered tree grassland at Monduli in January 1943 to *Acacia* woodland and scrub in the Makuyuni area, and south to similar country round Katesh, at the southern foot of Mt Hanang, where it was seen in February 1946. It was always presumed that birds seen in all those localities belonged to the race *massaicus*, following Grant and Mackworth-Praed (1955).

*Tchagra minuta* Marsh Tchagra

In view of the sparse distribution of this species in E Tanzania, as noted by Britton (1980), it is worth recording its occurrence in the Uvidunda Mts, where a male (34/3) and immature female (34/4) were collected at Chonwe at 1550 m, in bracken in May 1934. It was also seen at Mahenge in December 1951, and at Bulongwa, Njombe District, in July 1946, in both places in herbaceous scrub on hillsides.

*Lanius cabanisi* Long-tailed Fiscal

The Long-tailed Fiscal was to be found in N Tanzania to the west of the western limits of the range Namanga-Lake Manyara given by Britton (1980). It was recorded in January 1945 at Engamat, in the Crater Highlands, at 2600 m, well above the altitudinal limit suggested by Britton.

*Lanius collaris* Fiscal

Records of this species from Mt Hanang between 1850-2000 m in February 1946, from Dareda, Mbulu District, in July 1958, at 1500 m, and from Dongabesh, Mbulu District, at 1850 m, extend to the south the range given by Britton (1980) for this species in N Tanzania.

*Prionops plumata* Helmet Shrike

It is worth noting the occurrence of this species at Sanje, Ulanga District, a locality in SE Tanzania some 200 km west of Utete, a region from which inland records appear to be scarce. A male (33/13) and a female (33/4) were collected there in March 1933.

*Prionops retzii* Retz's Helmet Shrike

Britton (1980) includes Kilosa among the localities where the race *graculina* occurs. In January 1935 a male (35/4) shot at Kisanga, in south-west Kilosa, some 20 km from the Iringa border, was identified at the British Museum (Natural History) as an intergrade between that race and the southern race *tricolor*. This species was also recorded from Rufiri, near the Rufiri River, a south-western tributary of the Kilombero River, and presumably assignable to the latter race.

*Cosmopsarus regius* Golden-breasted Starling

In addition to the localities given for this species in NE Tanzania by Britton (1980) should be noted the Kisiwani-Gonja areas in the thorn bush country at the western foot of the South Pare Mts, where it was frequent in July 1942. It was also found at Naberera, in the Masai steppe in December 1942.

*Cosmopsarus unicolor* Ashy Starling

Mackworth-Praed and Grant (1955) stated that the call of this species was unrecorded. It would appear to be a very quiet bird, for although it was frequently encountered from 1934 onwards in the Central Province and Kilosa District, and in Mbulu at Mangola Springs, it was not until January 1960 that its call was heard for the first time. It consisted of two plaintive notes *kuri kiwera*, the second higher than the first. It was a slight call, rather squeaky or rusty in quality. A light rattling of the bill accompanied the second note. The call was sometimes preceded by two or three chucked or warbled notes, but all the calls were quiet and intimate, as of a gentle conversation between the four birds seen together. There was also a rather longer call which could be syllabified as

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{tchee}\delta \\ \text{koora} \nearrow \text{chink chink} \end{array}$$

repeated twice.

*Lamprotonis chalybeus* Blue-eared Glossy Starling*Lamprotonis chloropterus* Lesser Blue-eared Glossy Starling

In December 1951 several Blue-eared Glossy Starlings were watched hawking flying ants from the tops of fig trees at Kilingali. The Lesser Blue-eared Glossy Starling was said to eat insects injurious to cotton in Kilosa, and flocks of up to a dozen were often to be seen in the cotton fields. In 1934 it was recorded eating small locust hoppers in Kilosa and the stomach of a female collected in 1935 contained remains of *Orthoptera*, *Coleoptera* and *Lepidoptera* (W.V. Harris *pers. comm.*).

*Lamprotonis purpureopterus* Rüppell's Long-tailed Glossy Starling

In view of the restricted range of this species given by Britton (1980) for N Tanzania, it is worth noting that it was recorded in June 1959 near Loliondo to the north of the Serengeti, and almost to the top of the western Rift Wall, east of Serengeti, at Digo Digo in the Sonjo area of Masailand.

*Onychognathus walleri* Waller's Chestnut-winged Starling

To the localities listed by Britton (1980) where this species occurs in NE Tanzania, should be added the South Pare Mts where it was recorded from ever-green forest between Mtii and Mamba in June 1942. It also occurred in the forest at the foot of the crater of Embagai in the Crater Highlands.

*Poeoptera kenricki* Kenrick's Starling

This species was recorded at Tandala Mission, Njombe District, in July 1946, where several birds were seen at 2000 m in *Eucalyptus* trees in cultivations. That locality is 50 km north-west of Mando Forest, the only locality given by Britton (1980) in southern Tanzania for this starling. It is well-distributed round Mt Meru and was nesting in October 1943 and April 1946 at Narok near Arusha township.

*Spreo hildebrandti* Hildebrandt's Starling

This starling was infrequently recorded in northern Kilosa District in the Geiro-Kibedya area, somewhat to the east of Dodoma and lying outside the general range given by Britton (1980) for this species.

*Spreo superbus* Superb Starling

Britton (1980) gives the range of this species in Tanzania as north of the highlands of Mbeya and Iringa through Singida and Dodoma to Arusha and Mkomazi GR. This starling also occurred in Kilosa District, both in the north at Kibedya where a female (32/4) was collected in March 1932, and at Kilingali where it was seen in December 1932 and again in May 1935. Both records, and especially that from Kilingali, are from areas well to the east of the general range given by Britton (1980).

*Anthreptes longuemarei* Violet-backed Sunbird

Britton (1980) restricts the range of the race *nyassae* to SE Tanzania from Nandembo to Songea. It is therefore of considerable interest that a male (36/30) was collected in May 1936 at Vikindu, 20 km south of Dar es Salaam, and 460 km north-north-east of Nandembo. The identification of this skin has been carefully rechecked at the British Museum (Natural History) and it has been confirmed by P. Colston (*in litt.*) that the bird is *A. longuemarei nyassae*. The male was in company with a female but was not in breeding condition.

*Nectarinia mediocris* Eastern Double-collared Sunbird

While Britton (1980) includes Mbulu in the range of this species in NE Tanzania, it is worth noting its presence specifically on Mt Hanang, in the southern part of that District. In February 1946 it was found from 1900 m on the eastern side, on the edge of the forest, through the forest and scrubby moorland on the north-east slopes, to the open moorland at Werther Peak at 3200 m. A male (46/23) and female (46/24) were collected.

The range of the race *fuelleborni* is given by Britton (1980) as Iringa, Songea and S Mbeya. It has also been recorded from Njombe District in July 1946, at 2000 m, at Tandala Mission and at Ailsa, in the highlands above Chimala.

*Nectarinia olivacea* Olive Sunbird

The range of the race *changamwensis* in NE Tanzania is given by Britton (1980) as inland to the E and W Usambara Mts, to the Taita Hills in Kenya. This species was recorded in June 1942 in lowland forest at Gonja at the eastern foot of the South Pare Mts, and is worth noting as another specific locality defining more clearly its range inland in NE Tanzania.

*Nectarinia pulchella* Beautiful Sunbird

A record of this species in June 1959 from Digo Digo, Songo, is presumably referable to the race *melanogastra*, and should be noted as an additional locality for this species in Tanzania, being 160 km north-west of Arusha, the westerly limit of its range in NE Tanzania given by Britton (1980). It was also found at Kilingali, south-east of Kilosa township, and at Geiro, in the north of that District, localities lying outside the general range given by Britton for interior Tanzania.



*Nectarinia reichenowi* Golden-winged Sunbird

To the localities in N Tanzania by Britton (1980) for this species should be added Loliondo, 2150 m, in the north of Masailand near the Tanzania-Kenya border, where it was seen in full plumage in June 1959.

*Nectarinia tacazze* Tacazze Sunbird

The range given by Britton (1980) for this species in N Tanzania should be extended southwards to include Mt Hanang where one bird was seen feeding on *Protea sp.* at 2900 m on the ascent of the southern slopes of the mountain (Fuggles-Couchman 1953).

*Nectarinia venusta* Variable Sunbird

To localities in the plateau country of Tanzania mentioned by Britton (1980) for this species should be added Kilosa, where it was recorded both in the north at Geiro, 1200 m, in January 1952, and at Kilingali, 500 m, in December 1951, and breeding there in February 1952. It was a common bird in the Uvidunda and Ukaguru Mts of that District in 1935-37.

*Nectarinia veronii* Mouse-coloured Sunbird

In view of the statement by Britton (1980) that records of this species from many suitable sites are lacking, it is worth noting its occurrence at Dolphin Point, on the coast some 20 km north of Dar es Salaam, where it was frequently seen in January-May 1957 in scattered coastal scrub with Baobabs and low trees. It was in full song during that period and attention was first drawn to it by the characteristic quality of the song which included something of the songs of *Sphenoeacus mentalis* and *Cercotrichas leucophrys*.

*Zosterops abyssinica* Abyssinian White-eye

Britton (1980) writes of this species as typically a bird of the E plateau of Kenya and N Tanzania, giving the range as from the Horr Valley and Wajir to Narok in Kenya to Singida and Dodoma in Tanzania. This would seem to omit the country round the northern foothills of the Nguru Mts, and possibly that round the North Pare Mts, from both of which localities it has been recorded. A female (38/20) was collected from a small flock at Sagasa in northern Morogoro District in August 1938, at ca. 600 m, and it was recorded from Geiro in northern Kilosa in January 1952. In June 1942 a small flock was seen at Same at 940 m.

While the broad description of the range probably includes the Mbulumbulu area, above the western Rift Wall, it is worth noting the occurrence of this White-eye there, where a female (45/24) was collected from a small group in August 1945 as the birds worked through *Vernonia sp.* 'scrub' in the valley of the Mbulumbulu River, in the open grassland below the forest, at 1750 m. The two specimens have been checked recently at the British Museum (Natural History) and P. Bolston (*in litt.*) confirms that they are both typical *Z. abyssinica flavilateralis*.

*Amblyospiza albifrons* Grosbeak Weaver

The status of this species in Northern Tanzania is rather indefinite from the range given by Britton (1980) and it is thought that records from Mbulumbulu, at 2000 m, and from the swamp at Karatu, Mbulu District, at 1700 m, should be noted. A female (42/45) was collected in November 1942 from open banks of the Mbulumbulu River in forest, and old nests were seen in a small pond in a clearing in the forest. At Karatu in June 1946 there were numerous birds in the tall rushes but no nests were seen.

*Anaplectes rubriceps* Red-headed Weaver

In view of the somewhat local distribution of this species, it is worth noting its occurrence on the south-east slopes of Mt Hanang in February 1946, in scattered tree-grassland, and at Ilonga, Kilosa District, in January 1953 in mixed woodland.

*Anomalospiza imberbis* Parasitic Weaver

Of only two personal records of this uncommon weaver in Tanzania, that from the edge of the Nou Forest, Mbulu District, at ca. 1850 m, in July 1958 is worth noting as an additional locality to the few given by Britton (1980) in Tanzania.

*Euplectes ardens* Red-naped Widowbird

This species was found in *Vernonia* sp. scrub on the upper edge of the forest above Nangwa, Mt Hanang, in February 1946, at 2600 m, well above the altitudinal limit given by Britton (1980) for this widowbird. Unfortunately, a specimen was not obtained and the race of the Hanang birds remains speculative.

*Euplectes gierowii* Black Bishop

The range of this species as given by Britton (1980) should be extended southwards to include N Kilosa District at Geiro, where it was recorded in January 1952 in semi-arid *Acacia tortilis* thorn scrub and grassland. Britton states that it is seldom found far from water, but at Geiro, and on the edge of the Ardai Plain and to a lesser extent at Katesh, that was not the case. While birds were sparse in most localities from where it was known in NE Tanzania, the country between Babati and Gallapo Mission, Mbulu District, appeared to be a stronghold of this species. In February 1959 it was numerous singly, or two or three together, widely scattered through the low bush and tall grass.

*Euplectes macrourus* Yellow-mantled Widowbird

The occurrence of this species in full breeding dress at Kongwa in December 1947 considerably extends to the east the range given by Britton (1980), but it was never encountered in the Eastern Region nor in N Tanzania.

*Euplectes nigroventris* Zanzibar Red Bishop

Although the Moreaus (1938), in their paper on the comparative breeding ecology of this species and *Euplectes hordeacea*, stated that they had not found the two spp. numerous in proximity, close sympatry can occur and both species were found nesting in a mixed colony in *Pennisetum purpureum*, *Panicum maximum* and *Chloris gayana*, shrubby *Vernonia* sp. and cultivated Ramie, *Boehmeria nivea*, at the Morogoro Experimental Station in 1938. This may have been an abnormal occurrence, but the species are not wholly allopatric (Fuggles-Couchman 1943).

*Ploceus baglafecht* Baglafecht Weaver

The range given by Britton (1980) should be extended south to include Mt Hanang where this species was recorded in February 1946 from open grassland with scattered scrub, at Nangwa at 1900 m, and in *Vernonia* sp. scrub fringing the forest at 2600 m, where three pairs were building nests in small *Croton* trees on 9 February 1946.

*Ploceus intermedius* Masked Weaver

The range of this species is rather wider than that suggested by Britton (1980). Thus it was found well to the west of Kidugallo, in western Kilosa District at Kidete Station, where a male (32/7) was collected from a colony nesting in a coconut palm in May 1932. It also occurred to the west of Arusha, near Mto wa Mbu, where birds were nesting in low Gall *Acacia*, *A. drepanolobium*, in May 1944.

*Ploceus jacksoni* Golden-backed Weaver

Britton (1980) mentions the nesting of this species in mixed colonies with other species of weaver e.g. *P. melanocephala* and *P. taeniopterus* in Kenya, and that it is mainly or wholly allopatric with *P. intermedius* in Tanzania. It is therefore worth noting its nesting in close proximity not only to that species, but also to *P. velatus* at Engaruka in January 1945. The first two species were building in adjoining fig trees beside the small Engaruka River, while *P. velatus* was building in *Acacia* sp. nearby.

*Ploceus ocularius* Spectacled Weaver

This species was recorded at three sites round Mt Hanang, in tall *Vernonia* spp. thicket in glades in the upper area of the forest at 2100 m; in dry gallery forest on the northern slopes at the same altitude, and in the cultivation zone on the southern slopes. Mt Hanang lies in between the ranges given by Britton (1980) for the two races *suaehelicus* and *crocatatus* and provides an appreciable extension of the range given for this species in Tanzania.

*Ploceus spekei* Speke's Weaver

Britton (1980) includes in the range of this species in N Tanzania the Arusha area and the Crater Highlands. To those localities may be added the Bashanet area of Central Mbulu District, some 90 km south of the southern edge of the Crater Highlands at Ngorongoro. In January 1960 a colony of some fourteen nests was active in a solitary tree in sparsely treed rough grassland.

*Bubalornis niger* Red-billed Buffalo Weaver

In May 1959 a colony was discovered nesting over water 30 m from the shore in Hombola Dam, Dodoma. The dam had filled the previous year and had nearly submerged the tall *Acacia tortilis* in which this buffalo weaver was nesting. Presumably the trees in the dam had been the customary site of this colony prior to the building of the dam and the birds had remained faithful to the site despite its changed environment.

Dodoma is given by Britton (1980) as the eastern limit of the range of this species in Central Tanzania, but the range should be extended to include Kilosa District at Kilingali, 60 km south-east of the eastern boundary of Dodoma Region. Birds were nesting there in January 1952.

*Dinemellia dinemelli* White-headed Buffalo Weaver

The eastern limits of the range given by Britton (1980) for this species are left undefined and it is thought worth noting its occurrence through the lowlands of Arusha and Kilimanjaro to the lowlands on the north-east side of the South Pare Mts at Gonja in June 1942, and south to the country in the north of Kilosa District, at Kibedya, where it was recorded in September 1938.

*Histurgops ruficauda* Rufous-tailed Weaver

Another locality for this species, lying somewhat east and south of the broad range "... west of Lake Eyasi to the Wembere" given by Britton (1980), is Lake Basotu in south-west Mbulu District, 110 km south of Lake Eyasi, where two birds were seen in November 1960.

*Passer motitensis* Rufous Sparrow

Britton (1980) gives the eastern limit of the range of this species in N Tanzania as the Arusha area. It should be noted that that should be read to include the lower western slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro at Ngare Nairobi, where it was commonly seen during the period 1942-45, and was nesting there in June 1945.

*Sporopipes frontalis* Speckle-fronted Weaver

This species reaches Kilosa District on the south-eastern boundary of the range Mkomazi-Dodoma, given by Britton (1980). It occurred in the north at Geiro where it was recorded in December 1952, in scattered *Acacia tortilis* -grassland.

*Vidua fischeri* Straw-tailed Whydah

It is worth noting the occurrence of this species at Itigi, Manyoni District, where it was recorded in May 1956, as that locality may not be included in the range given by Britton (1980).

*Estrilda erythronotus* Black-cheeked Waxbill

This species has been recorded in two localities apparently lying on the fringes of the range given by Britton (1980). In November 1952 it was found at Geiro, in north Kilosa, on the south-eastern fringe of the range, while in November 1956 it was seen at Oldeani, at 1700 m, to the north-west of the range, foraging in the tops of *Eucalyptus* trees.

*Estrilda melanotis* Yellow-bellied Waxbill

The boundaries of the range given by Britton (1980) for this waxbill in N Tanzania are ill-defined and do not appear to include the Crater Highlands, where it was seen in January 1945 in several localities from 1850-2800 m, nor Mt Hanang, where it was recorded from Himi, at 1900 m, in February 1946. It appeared to be less numerous round Mt Hanang than in other localities in the north of Tanzania.

*Pyrenestes minor* Lesser Seed-cracker

In addition to occurring in the Pugu Hills (Britton 1980), this species was recorded once at the coast in thick scrub at Mtoni, on the southern outskirts of Dar es Salaam. While only a sight record, a very good view was obtained, showing the plumage colour and pattern quite clearly.

*Pytilia afra* Orange-winged Pytilia

In view of the local distribution of this species within its general range (Britton 1980), it is worth recording its occurrence in the Ukaguru Mts in 1934, where it was seen along forest edges at Vingwele, 1450 m.

*Uraeginthus bengalus* Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu

Dar es Salaam does not appear to be included in the range given by Britton (1980) for this species. It was recorded there in 1936, and at other times 1953-58, but it was never numerous.

*Uraeginthus ianthinogaster* Purple Grenadier

It is worth noting that this species was recorded at Same in June 1942, and in the north of Kilosa, near Kibedya, in September 1938, both localities lying somewhat east of the range given by Britton (1980).

*Lonchura malabarica* Silver-bill

Britton (1980) uses the rather indefinite term "... from the Arusha area" in describing one of the two localities from which most recent records of this species have come. This may be meant to refer to the Arusha Region, or to the District itself. It is therefore considered worth noting that the Silver-bill has been recorded from Engaruka in the Rift Valley in Masailand, where a pair was seen in January 1945.

*Emberiza cabanisi* Cabanis Bunting

Britton (1980) gives the range of this species as from Songea to the E Usambara Mts in the east, with no mention of its reaching the coast. But it is also referred to as a wanderer and records of its occurrence in Dar es Salaam District in 1935, 1936 and 1956 are possibly of wanderers. But a male (35/63) with enlarged gonads was collected at Kisangire in December 1935, about 100 km south-west of Dar es Salaam, in the coastal uplands at ca. 250 m. The other

sight records were at Chungu, 40 km south-south-west of Dar es Salaam, in January 1936, and on the coast at Kunduchi, 20 km north of the town, in June 1956.

*Emberiza flaviventris* Golden-breasted Bunting

To the localities mentioned by Britton (1980) for this species should be added the coast at Kunduchi, 20 km north of Dar es Salaam, where it was recorded in December 1955, and on the edge of the Dar es Salaam township in February 1957. It was also found in February 1946 near Katesh at the southern foot of Mt Hanang.

*Emberiza tahapisi* Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting

Although widely distributed in Tanzania this species is uncommon (Britton 1980), and it is worth recording its occurrence near Mgeta, on the western slopes of the Uluguru Mts at 1900 m, in June 1938; near the top of the western Rift Wall above Engaruka, on the edge of the Crater Highlands at 1400 m, in January 1945, and at Bolissa, Kondoa District, in March 1956. These are the author's only records of this species in Central, Eastern and Northern Tanzania in 30 years.

*Serinus donaldsoni* Grosbeak Canary

The occurrence of this canary at Mangola, in the Lake Eyasi depression, is worth noting, as the locality, lying at 35°E, is at the extreme western edge of the range given by Britton (1980) for N Tanzania. One bird was seen at Mangola in November 1956 in scattered low thorn bush in denuded grassland.

*Serinus dorsostriatus* White-bellied Canary

This species has been recorded in northern Kilosa District at Geiro, somewhat beyond the eastern boundary of the general range given by Britton (1980) to Dodoma and Singida. A female (52/7) was collected at Geiro in December 1952.

*Serinus sulphuratus* Brimstone Canary

Britton (1980) does not appear to include the Eastern Region of Tanzania in the range of this species. He confines the range in E and S Tanzania to the coast at Mikindani, inland to Songea and Iringa. It should therefore be noted that it has been recorded to the north of that range, both inland at Mahenge at 1250 m in April 1954, and on the coast on the northern outskirts of Dar es Salaam in June 1957.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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#### APPENDIX: GAZETTEER

The following localities in Tanzania were not included in the Gazetteer in Britton (1980) nor in the first part of this paper.

Locality	°/ ' S	°/ ' E
Bashanet	4 03	35 28
Bulongwe	9 20	34 04
Chenzema	7 09	37 35
Dongabesh	4 04	35 23
Embulul	3 00	35 46
Galappo Mission	4 14	35 51
Gelai	2 33	36 05
Karatu	3 20	35 42
Kiberege	7 55	36 54
Kibungo Forest	7 02	37 47
Kidete	6 27	37 16
Kidete Station	6 40	36 43
Kisanga	7 23	36 45
Kisangire	7 27	38 43
Mgeta	7 04	37 33
Mhonda Mission	6 08	37 37
Mkamba	7 24	38 57
Mngazi	7 15	37 33
Peramiho Mission	10 38	35 28
Rufiri	8 39	36 22
Sagasa	5 56	37 33
Samatwa	5 34	37 11
Usa	3 24	36 54

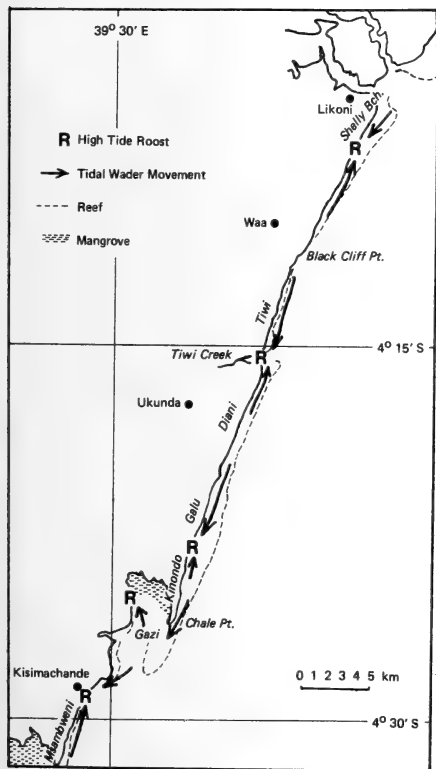
## SOME COUNTS OF WINTERING WADERS ON THE SOUTH KENYA COAST

D.J. Pearson

The coral and sand beaches, flats and reefs of the Kenya littoral provide winter feeding areas for many thousands of Palaearctic waders. During the past ten years, these coastal waders have quite frequently been counted at certain high tide roosting areas, notably at Ras Iwetine at Mombasa, at Mida Creek and at Shelley Beach and Galu Beach on the south coast (Britton & Britton 1976; unpubl. obs. of the author, P.L. Britton and M.A.C. Coverdale). However, no systematic survey of numbers appears to have been attempted for any substantial stretch of the coast, and apart from the order of numbers indicated by Pearson & Britton (1980) no estimate of the coastal wader population has previously been reported. Over a series of spring tides from 1-5 January 1984 the author endeavoured to locate and count all high tide wader roosts along the Kenya south coast from Likoni to Msambweni. Spring tides were chosen because birds are then less scattered and tend to be concentrated into fewer gatherings at high water than during neap periods. Only five significant roosts were found along the 60 km stretch of coastline concerned. The location of these, and the direction of the main wader movements noted on incoming tides are shown on the map. A

roost at the southern extremity of Shelley Beach included birds which moved in from extensive coral flats to the north-east, and apparently from as far as Black Cliff Point to the south. The next, at Tiwi Creek, accommodated birds flying in from Tiwi Beach feeding areas to the north, and from the reefs and coral beaches along the northern part of Diani. A roost along the high sandy beach at Galu certainly accounted for birds from the southern part of Diani, from Galu and perhaps from Kinondo to the south. A small gathering on a sandbar at the back of Gazi Flats accounted approximately for the birds normally to be found feeding on the flats at low tide. Finally, a roost on a small beach at Kisimachande was thought to include birds from feeding areas around Chale Point as well as from Msambweni Reef.

Details of counts at the five roosts are given in Table 1. The two species of sandplover are very difficult to count separately when present together in large mixed flocks, and numbers of the two are therefore tabulated together. The <sup>1</sup>Great Sandplover was, however, invariably the dominant species of the two; it was considered to have accounted for about 70 per cent of the sandplovers at Tiwi, 80 per cent



at Galu and 90 per cent at Shelley Beach and Kisimachande. The main species making up the total of just over 8000 waders found were thus Great Sandplover, Curlew Sandpiper, Sanderling, Turnstone and Grey Plover. Turnstones were found mainly along the Diani-Galu section where tidewrack patches were most abundant. Little Stints were generally scarce; the only substantial numbers

TABLE 1. PALAEARCTIC WADER COUNTS AT HIGH TIDE ROOSTS ON THE SOUTH KENYA COAST  
JANUARY 1984

Date and height of high water above datum at Kilindini	1 Jan (2.70m)	2 Jan (2.80m)	3 Jan (2.86m)	4 Jan (2.89m)	5 Jan (2.90m)		
Roost counted	Tiwi Creek (birds in from S)	Tiwi Creek (birds in from N)	Shelley Beach	Galu Beach	Msam-bweni Beach	Gazi Flats	
							Totals*
Oystercatcher	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>							
Caspian Plover	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
<i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>							
Ringed Plover	30	22	60	80	40	12	244
<i>C. hiaticula</i>							
Great/Mongolian Sandplover	125	60	1100	480	660	200	2630
<i>C. leschenaultii/mongolus</i>							
Grey Plover	73	60	90	240	80	60	203
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>							
Common Sandpiper	5	2	10	0	0	2	19
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>							
Whimbrel	9	10	80	2	35	1	137
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>							
Greenshank	6	10	11	3	3	30	63
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>							
Terek Sandpiper	21	11	10	125	70	20	257
<i>Xenus cinereus</i>							
Sanderling	310	90	400	350	150	20	1320
<i>Calidris alba</i>							
Curlew Sandpiper	285	190	150	600	500	60	1790
<i>C. ferruginea</i>							
Little Stint	3	0	250	0	3	90	346
<i>C. minuta</i>							
Turnstone	225	60	60	300	90	0	735
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>							
Crab Plover**	0	0	20	2	220	0	242
<i>Dromas ardeola</i>							
ROOST TOTALS*	1610		2240	2180	1840	495	8370

\* Totals rounded to three significant figures

\*\*A migrant visitor from northeast Africa, the Crab Plover is only marginally a Palearctic species



in roosts were from localised feeding areas on fine silty sand at the southern end of Shelley Beach and on the Gazi Flats. The only Whimbrel gatherings of any size were derived from the reefs north of Shelley Beach and off Chale Point and Msambweni. Crab Plovers are known to occur commonly on the reefs of the southernmost part of the Kenya coast (M.A.C. Coverdale, pers. comm.) but the Kisimachande count is perhaps the largest reported in Kenya away from the traditional Mida site on the north coast. Numbers of Terek Sandpipers from Galu to Msambweni are also noteworthy since again these seem to be the largest recorded in Kenya away from Mida; Terek numbers along Galu beach in fact regularly exceed 100 on spring high tides (unpubl. obs. of the author and M.A.C. Coverdale).

Some small high tide parties may well have been overlooked on the beaches at Waa, or at Kinondo, and species such as the Ringed Plover and Common Sandpiper which remain quite scattered at high tide were probably underestimated. Nevertheless, the species totals produced by this survey were thought to represent reasonable estimates for the wader population of the 60 km stretch of coastline immediately south of Mombasa. It seems appropriate here to consider the information available on wintering wader numbers elsewhere on the Kenya coast. North of Mombasa Is., from Nyali to Mtwapa Creek, P.L. Britton (pers. comm.) regularly found 1000-2000 waders, a high proportion of these gathering at a high tide roost at Ras Iwetine. Further north, the author counted some 1500 waders at low tide in February along a 10 km coastal stretch northwards from Kilifi, which were presumed to represent about half the birds feeding between Kilifi and Mida. There are typically about 5000 wintering waders feeding on Mida Creek itself (author's obs., unpubl.) and some 3000-4000 to be found from Malindi north to the Sabaki mouth. A few more thousands would be accounted for by feeding areas from Malindi south to Watamu, and from Vipingo to Kikambala. In all, therefore, some twenty thousand would seem to be the best estimate for wintering numbers between Nyali and Sabaki. For the whole of the coast from Msambweni to the Sabaki (some 200 km) this would give almost thirty thousand waders. Numbers of individual species would probably lie within the following ranges:

Curlew Sandpiper 6000-12000; Great Sandplover 6000-12000; Sanderling 3000-6000; Grey Plover 2000-3000; Turnstone 1000-3000; Mongolian Sandplover 1000-3000; Terek Sandpiper 1000-2000; Ringed Plover 1000-2000; Little Stint 1000-2000; Whimbrel 500-1000.

These are of course very provisional figures. A much more accurate census of this stretch of coastline could be carried out by a small team over a single series of spring tides, and this would clearly be a worthwhile exercise. In addition, the remaining 300 or so kilometres of the Kenya coast, including the sandy beaches and flats around Formosa Bay and muddy mangrove areas around Lamu and Pate in the north, and the mangrove dominated stretch from Funzi to the Tanzania border in the south, would certainly repay more investigation.

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## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

## NESTING AND ROOSTING RECORDS OF PICIFORM BIRDS

Our research on woodpeckers, barbets and honeyguides for *The birds of Africa*, and Short's long experience with woodpeckers prompt us to comment on the habits of piciform birds relative to 'nesting' reports. The literature is replete with casual statements about 'nesting' woodpecker-like birds, and the use of so many nest record schemes in which nesting reports are skimpy also indicates a laxity of rigour in checking such records.

Woodpeckers and barbets not only nest in cavities that they excavate, but they roost in holes that the birds may excavate at any time of year. In woodpeckers the sexes usually roost separately, and each individual is apt to have available one or more potential roosting cavities in addition to that normally occupied. Roosting holes are defended vigorously by the owners, and, indeed, in barbets especially, the roosting cavity is a major centre of activity throughout the year. As for honeyguides, those species that use woodpeckers and barbets as hosts may investigate nesting and roosting cavities of prospective hosts at times other than the breeding season (pers. obs.).

The mere fact that a woodpecker (or barbet) excavates a hole is no indication of its breeding. Likewise, defence of a cavity does not constitute evidence that the cavity is, or will be, a nesting site. We note that some picids carry wood chips from the cavity that they excavate - these could be misinterpreted as the carrying of faecal sacs from their 'young'.

The main way to ascertain nesting in woodpeckers and barbets is to examine the contents of the cavity (a mirror and torch can be used to do this). Otherwise, careful observations of sustained incubation (e.g. frequent changeovers by two or more individuals, often marked by vocal or other displays) and repeated carrying of food into a cavity are good indications of nesting. There can be problems associated with the latter, for a male may courtship-feed its mate inside a nest-to-be, and the young in the nest may be a honeyguide rather than young barbets or woodpeckers!

These remarks are designed to encourage caution and more careful observation in reporting nesting attempts by piciform birds, to give us accurate bases for breeding records.

Lester L. Short, American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY 10024 and Jennifer F.M. Horne, National Museums of Kenya, Box 40658, Nairobi

OBSERVATIONS ON NESTING OF THE BROWN SWIFT *Apus niansae*<sup>1</sup>  
IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Although the Brown Swift *Apus niansae* is regularly seen in most of its range in Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, its biology is not well known (Brooke 1971). In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, it is locally abundant during the rainy seasons (February or March through April and June through September) but uncommon in the dry months of the year (EKU, pers.obs.; Guichard 1950; Pain et al. 1975, Smith 1944). During the rainy seasons it nests in colonies inside some of the larger, older buildings of the city. From 1965-1969 I observed a colony nesting in the Science Building at Arat Kilo campus of Haile Selassie I University (now called Addis Ababa University). Some of my observations are reported below.

**Nesting site:** This swift is known to nest in crevices of cliffs and gorges (van Someren 1922) and in air vents under house eaves (Schwab 1979). The colony reported in this paper was located in the attic of the Science Building, a 50 m long, 15 m wide, 2 storey concrete structure built in the late 1930s. The swifts nested on a concrete beam next to but inside the outer wall of the building, just below the junction of the outer wall and the roof and about 10 m above ground level immediately above the ceiling of the upper floor of the building. They entered the building through cracks and small holes in the outer wall at the level of the concrete beam.

**General activity:** During many but not all days during the rainy seasons, as many as 75 to 100 pairs of the Brown Swift circled over and often flew in and out of the Science Building. They were most active in the early morning from about sunrise at 0600 to 0900-1100 and one to two hours before sunset from about 1700-1900, usually circling above the Science Building sometimes at heights of up to 200-300 m. When the swifts started to show nesting activity (eg. adults chasing each other and apparently copulating near the Science Building, flying into and out of the building or flying into and remaining in it, young calling in the attic, young falling out of the building, and one count of nests with eggs and young), they remained active throughout the day, chasing each other and flying in and out of the eaves of the building.

During the rainy season this swift was seen in flocks in several other areas of Addis Ababa. After a major rain storm, especially in the late evening or early evening before sunset, it was not uncommon to see individual swifts circling high over the city. In the dry (non-breeding) months, swifts were rarely seen at all although very occasionally when I visited the Science Building after dark, I heard a few birds (probably less than 5) calling from the attic (8 nights during 5 years' observation).

**Time of nesting:** Addis Ababa has two rainy seasons, the small rains that fall any time between February and April and the big rains from June through September. From 1965 through 1969 the Brown Swift nested usually during the small rains, always during the big rains, but never during the dry months. Thus in 1965 nesting occurred in April and July through September, in 1966 February through April and June through August, in 1967 March through September (this year the small rains continued through May, merging with the big rains), in 1968 February through April and June through September, and in 1969 June through September. Although the small rains did occur in 1969, no nesting took place then.

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<sup>1</sup> Called Nyanza Swift in *Birds of East Africa*.

**Nesting attempts:** Between 10-50 pairs attempted to nest at a time with number of nesting attempts varying annually from 4 in 1965, 6 in 1966, 9 in 1967, 7 in 1968, and 4 in 1969. The total number of pairs nesting varied annually from 150 in 1965, 60 in 1966, 195 in 1967, 150 in 1968, to 20 in 1969.

**Nests:** The nests were circular and consisted of numerous feathers glued together with pieces of straw 1-12 cm long. In one instance two pieces of loose concrete, each about 3 cm in diameter, were glued into the nest. Two nests measured 10 x 10 cm with the cavity 3 cm deep and 9 x 10 cm with the cavity 2.5 cm deep.

**Eggs and clutch size:** Four, elliptical, unspotted white to off-white eggs measured 22-26 x 13-15 (23.5 x 17.5 mm). Clutch size for 7 nests was 1.9 eggs/nest (3, 2, 2, 1, 1, 3, 1).

**Nesting success:** In May 1967 50 per cent (25 out of a total of 50 nests counted) had eggs or partly feathered young. In 1965, 1967 and 1968 48.3 per cent of the nests were estimated to have young calling in them (1965: 55 of 150; 1967: 100 of 195; 1968: 85 of 150).

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#### EXAMPLE OF APPARENT HYBRIDISATION BETWEEN *TERPSIPHONE RUFIVENTER* AND *TERPSIPHONE VIRIDIS*

The status of these two species in the area round Kampala is of some interest. Both species are common, and occur together in the same gardens in more than one place in Kampala. *T. rufiventer* is basically a forest species, and the race *somerani* occurs in southern Uganda in the true forests. The race *emini* tends to occur in more open areas, such as gardens and fragmented forest. This race has much paler rufous underparts than *somerani*. *T. viridis* occurs in southern Uganda in two forms: *restricta* which, as far as is known, is confined to the islands, and the adjacent shore of L. Victoria. In the Kampala area the commonest form of *viridis* is *ferreti*. This is a paler grey below than *restricta*, and the tail is not so long. Occasional

individuals are seen with the underparts a mixture of light grey and light rufous.

The following observations made in a Kampala garden, relate to successful breeding between a male *T. viridis ferreti* and a female *T. rufiventer emini*: Male bird: fairly rich rufous above with darker flight feathers. Head black with a slight crest, and a blue eye ring. Tail rufous, and with only slightly elongated central feathers. Underparts grey, under tail coverts pale rufous.

Female bird: Above as in the male. Tail not elongated. Below very pale rufous including the belly and under tail coverts.

The pair was observed building (only the female was actually observed building) and copulating between 5.6.81 and 10.6.81. On 10.6.81 the female was observed sitting, which she continued to do intermittently. The male was first observed sitting on 14.6.81 and the pair continued to share the incubation until 23.6.81. Unfortunately at that point I had to go on leave. But a subsequent observer informed me that the nest was blown down in a storm in early July, and one partly fledged chick was found dead at the foot of the tree.

Margaret Carswell, P.O. Box 7062, Kampala.

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#### A RECORD OF BAR-BREASTED FIREFINCH *LAGONOSTICTA RUFOPICTA NITIDULA* FROM TANZANIA

At 10.00 hours on 27 June 1982 I was tape-recording bird calls at the bridge crossing the Kalambo River in extreme SW Tanzania (08°16'S, 31°19'E). While walking along by the thick riverside vegetation I heard an unfamiliar twittering call coming from a clump of bushes. I recorded the call and then moved closer to investigate its source. I approached to within 10 m before I saw three small birds sitting close to each other on a branch making the call. I recognised them as firefinches but not of a species with which I was familiar. After watching them for about 10 minutes through x10 binoculars, they flew down to a puddle 5 m away made by a small spring flowing into the river. All three birds drank and then bathed for the next 5 minutes. During this time I had excellent views of them from all angles and concluded that they were Bar-breasted Firefinches *Lagonosticta rufopicta*. There was an adult male and female while the third bird was an immature. The male was brownish grey on the lower chest fading to light greyish buff on the belly. There was a pinkish wash on the upper chest and throat with scattered white spots. The back, rump and tail were warm brown on all three birds. After the birds finished bathing they flew off into the undergrowth. I stayed in the vicinity the rest of the day but other than hearing the distinctive twittering call a few more times, I did not see the birds again.

The possibility of confusion with similar species occurring in the area was excluded on the following basis. The Red-billed Firefinch, *L. senegala*, occurs in drier situations and has a reddish rump in both sexes; the birds I saw had brown rumps. There was more white spotting on the chest of the male than there is in the male of *L. senegala*. The African Firefinch, *L. rubricata*, which could occur in the same habitat as *nitidula*, is darker brown above and both sexes have red rumps and black tails. I am familiar

with *L. senegala* and *L. rubricata* and saw both species that day. Their calls are quite distinctive and not very similar to the call I recorded.

Some authors, Benson *et al.* (1971), consider the southern race of *L. rufopicta* to be a separate species, *L. nitidula*. Britton (1980) includes *L. nitidula* as a race of *L. rufopicta* and speculates that it might occur in extreme SW Tanzania.

I believe that this is the first reported occurrence of *L. rufopicta* from Tanzania and the first record of the race *nitidula* from East Africa.

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D.C. Moyer, 325 E. Walnut Street, Perkasio, PA 18944, U.S.A.

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#### NOTICE

##### RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION CONFERENCE-NOVEMBER 1985 ANNOUNCEMENT AND FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS

The 1985 Raptor Research Foundation (RRF) International Meeting and Symposium on the Management of Birds of Prey will be held at the Capitol Plaza Holiday Inn in Sacramento, California, November 2-20 1985. Highlights of the meeting will include: 1) The Second RRF Conference on Raptor Conservation Techniques - Twelve Years of Progress, 1973-1985; 2) a Western Hemisphere Meeting of the World Working Group on Birds of Prey (ICBP); 3) the Second International Vulture Symposium; 4) a Western North America Osprey Symposium; 5) a Workshop on North American Candidate Endangered Raptors; 6) an International Symposium on Raptor Reintroduction; and 7) a Symposium on Raptor Rehabilitation, Captive Breeding, and Public Education. For more information or if you are interested in presenting a paper, please contact Dr. Richard Olendorff, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, California 95825, or Nancy Venizelos, San Francisco Zoological Society, Sloat Blvd. at the Pacific Ocean, San Francisco, California 94132.

in the case of books, the town of publication and the publisher should be given. A number of works, which are cited frequently, should not be listed under 'References'; the name(s) of the author(s) and date(s) of publication should be given in the text in the normal way.

All contributions, which will be acknowledged, should be sent to the Editor, G.C. Backhurst, Box 24702, Nairobi, Kenya.

#### WORKS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE LISTED UNDER 'REFERENCES'

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This forms the fifth issue of *Scopus* and each report covers one calendar year. Records of Afrotropical Region (i.e. Ethiopian Region and Malagasy Sub-Region) and Oceanic birds should be sent to D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi; records of Palaearctic Region birds to Dr D.J. Pearson, Department of Biochemistry, Box 30197, Nairobi. Records should be sent in early in the new year to ensure the speedy production of the Bird Report. Reports of rare birds may be telephoned through to any OS-C member (numbers inside front cover) in the hope that the bird(s) may be seen by others. Criteria covering the submission of Bird Report records are given in *Scopus* Supplement, June 1982, copies of which are available from D.A. Turner.

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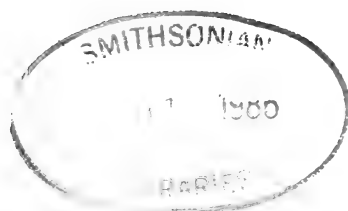
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*Edited by*

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# SCOPUS

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Contributions should be typed in 1½ or double spacing on one side of the paper only, with wide margins all round, and should be submitted in duplicate. Exceptionally clear hand-written MSS will be considered but these too should be sent in duplicate. Both English and scientific names of birds should be given when the species is first mentioned, thereafter only one should be used; they should be those of *Birds of East Africa* unless the species does not occur in that work.

Tables, which should be numbered, *should appear in the typescript, NOT grouped on separate sheets at the end*. Metric units should be used.

Illustrations should be on good quality white paper, bristol board or tracing material, in line, and should not be larger than 19 x 23 cm. Lettering (in black) will be the responsibility of the author and should be done neatly in Letraset (or similar), no larger than 14 point (3.9 mm). Each illustration should be numbered (Fig. 1, etc.) and be provided with a legend typed on a separate sheet of paper. Photographs will also be considered.

# SCOPUS

## GENERAL REVIEW

The year 1984 saw some unusual occurrences and influxes during conditions of extreme aridity, and there were three additions to the East African avifauna. Records from Kenya were supplied as usual by a rather small band of local observers, with some welcome contributions also from overseas visitors. Once again there was a valuable scattering of records from Tanzania, many of these from southern areas which until very recently had received no ornithological coverage for some twenty years.

In Kenya, parts of the rift valley were green in January and February, but most of the country started the year drier than usual, and the semi-arid eastern plateau country quickly became parched and leafless. Ducks and waders were concentrated on relatively few water bodies. Huge numbers of gulls and Shovelers *Anas clypeata* were present on the drying edges of Lake Nakuru in January but soon moved away as the lake receded even more. It was perhaps the drought conditions further north which were responsible for the occurrence early in the year of unusual Palaearctic species south of their normal range. A Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica* at Athi River and a Desert Wheatear *O. deserti* at Kiunga were the first satisfactorily recorded for East Africa; Woodchat Shrikes *Lanius senator* and Nubian Shrikes *L. nubicus*, first seen at Baringo at the end of 1983, remained for several weeks, with another Woodchat at Isiolo in February; and a Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* also visited Baringo. Unprecedented numbers of Great Black-headed Gulls *Larus ichthyaetus* and Slender-billed Gulls *L. genei* during the 1983/84 winter may also have been associated with the unusual conditions, and mention must also be made of a gathering of 24 Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus* at Ferguson's Gulf and a flock of 30 Sandwich Terns *Sterna sandvicensis* at Kipini. Other notable Palaearctic visitors early in the year included the first Kenya coastal Kentish Plovers *Charadrius alexandrinus* and the first Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* for ten years. Seabirds included an adult Kelp Gull *Larus dominicus* at Malindi in early January, the first record of this southern species north of Mozambique.

Several Afrotropical species occurred further south than usual early in the year. Thus, parties of Swallow-tailed Kites *Chelictinia riocourii* occurred south to Galana Ranch and Vipingo, and this species appeared in previously unrecorded numbers in the central rift valley. Roller populations showed evidence of displacement by birds from further north, with far more Rufous-crowned *Coracias naevia* than usual from January to April, the northern race *lorti* of the Lilac-breasted *C. caudata* replacing the usual nominate birds as far south as the Athi Plains and Tsavo, and the Palaearctic *C. garrulus* unusually scarce. The occurrence of significant numbers of Friedmann's Bush Larks *Mirafra pulpa* in northwest Kenya may also have represented an influx from further north.

The long rains were very late, brief and patchy, and for the first time in many years effectively failed throughout Kenya except near the coast and in parts of the west. The drought already affecting most central and eastern areas was not much alleviated. As in other years with late or diminished April rainfall (e.g. 1971, 1972, 1976, 1983), passerine migrants were very much in evidence on northward passage. Palaearctic warblers and shrikes were especially abundant in the rift valley, in the Nairobi/Thika area and even on the coast. Many migrants lingered until very late dates, Wheatears *Oenanthe spp.* and Rock Thrushes *Monticola saxatilis*, for example, until well through April, and *Acrocephalus* warblers until mid and even late May. Although *lorti* Lilac-breasted Rollers disappeared from southern parts of the country later in April, the southern occurrence of two Abyssinian Rollers *Coracias abyssinicus* during July was perhaps a reflection of continuing bad conditions to the north.

By September, much of the country was in the grip of extreme drought. Dams were dry, scrub and bushland degraded and grasslands bare, and many birds had disappeared from their usual habitats. The short rains began early, however, at the beginning of October. Showers were heavy and widespread over the next two months, and most of the country was rapidly transformed. Parts of the southeast, such as Kitui and Tsavo, were quite luxuriant by December, and some lakes and dam levels were partly restored. Local birds seemed to have returned to their usual areas by late November, and southward migration featured the usual numbers and variety of passerines and birds of prey; by December, duck and wader numbers were well up to usual in central Kenya. Some notable coastal occurrences during the second half of the year included a Broad-billed Prion *Pachyptila vittata* washed up at Watamu in August, a Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* off Shimonzi in September, another Kentish Plover, this time at Likoni in October, and a Long-toed Stint at Malindi in November.

The migration study at Ngulia Lodge in November-December again accounted for the majority of birds ringed in East Africa during the year. Coverage was good, but the moderate total of just less than 3500 migrants caught and ringed reflected the scarcity of misty night conditions at the appropriate moonless times. Together

with an account of activity at Ngulia, this report contains a review of migrant arrivals at another lighted highland site, Kilima Tea Factory in Mufindi District, southern Tanzania, where record numbers of pittas, rails and crakes were picked up in thick mist in early May.

The Sub-Committee has endeavoured over the years to maintain careful and responsible standards in assessing and publishing records, and has therefore asked for appropriate substantiation of anything unusual. Even so, its authority to sit in judgement on the records of others has occasionally been questioned, and to reduce such criticism it was decided during the year to establish a widely based East African Rare Birds Committee, to which the Sub-Committee would automatically refer (from 1 July 1984) any record new to one of the three countries, and any other sight record in the S(A) category. The members of this committee, each an accepted expert in his own area, are as follows: J.S. Ash, R.J. Dowsett, D.J. Fisher, S.G. Madge, G. Nikolaus, D.J. Pearson, A.J. Prater, I.J. Sinclair, T. Stevenson and D.A. Turner. We thank them for their assistance in vetting records for this report.

*D.J. Pearson, Chairman, Ornithological Sub-Committee, E.A.N.H.S.*

## SPECIES REPORT

This report covers the three countries Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Records are included under one or more categories, indicated by code letters as follows:

- S(A): SCARCE species in category A (five or fewer previous records from East Africa); all records of such species are published.
- S(B): SCARCE species in category B (six to twenty five previous records from East Africa); all records of such species are published.
- R : Species of interest whose status in East Africa requires clarification, and for which ALL records are REQUESTED. Records may be listed or summarized in full each year, or reviewed after several years.
- E : Records showing an EXTENSION of range, or from areas where the species is decidedly uncommon to scarce.
- N : Records included for their NUMERICAL interest, either of particularly large numbers or of careful counts.
- D : Records of migrants where DATES are of interest.
- B : Records of BREEDING interest, from new or unusual areas or involving interesting numerical elements.
- M : Records of MISCELLANEOUS interest.

Records were collated by T. Stevenson and D.J. Pearson.

## AFROTROPICAL AND OCEANIC SPECIES

## PODICIPEDIDAE: Grebes

*Podiceps nigricollis* Black-necked Grebe R: 250+ L. Bogoria 12 Jan and many 21 Feb; 500+ L. Nakuru 5 Aug, 300+ there 8 Nov and 15 on 20 Nov; a few L. Naivasha 15-16 Nov; 10+ Limuru 17 Nov (DKR, TS, DAT, DEW).

## PROCELLARIIDAE: Petrels, shearwaters

*Pachyptila vittata* Broad-billed Prion S(A): 1 found dead Watamu 16 Aug was assigned to the race *desolata* (formerly the Dove Prion) (per DAT, DJP).

*The second record of this species for Kenya and East Africa. See also Scopas 8: 43-44.*

## PHAETHONTIDAE: Tropicbirds

*Phaethon lepturus* White-tailed Tropicbird S(B): single adults off Shimoni or Funzi 4 Jan, 6 Feb, 19 and 21 Mar, 25 Sep and 10 Oct (PH, MH).

## SULIDAE: Boobies

*Sula dactylatra* Masked Booby R: an immature off Shimoni 8 Jan (PH, MH).

*Sula leucogaster* Brown Booby S(B): an adult off Shimonzi 10 Sep (PH, MH).

FREGATIDAE: Frigatebirds

*Fregata* sp. Singles off Watamu late Mar (DS) and 20 Nov (DJF, DAT).

ARDEIDAE: Herons, bitterns, egrets

*Ixobrychus minutus paysii* Little Bittern R: singles of this race

Nairobi NP 9 Jan and 13 Feb (DKR) and Baringo 15 Sep (JRPC).

1 attracted to lights Kilima Tea Factory (Mufindi, T) 10 May (AJB, EMB). 1 on pools Sokoke forest 3 Jan (JM et al.) was not racially assigned.

*Ixobrychus sturmii* Dwarf Bittern R: 1 near Olorgesailie 31 Oct (DAT).

*Ardeola idae* Madagascar Squacco Heron R: recorded from Limuru, Thika, Nairobi and Mara GR 19 May-10 Aug, mostly singles but up to 11 Thika OPs (KDR, DJP). 1 Ngorongoro (T) 15 Oct (DAT).

*Ardeola rufiventris* Rufous-bellied Heron R: in S Tanzania, 2-4 Kihanga Dam (Mufindi) 14-24 Oct and 1 Mbarali Rice Scheme 27 Oct (AJB, EMB, PJG).

*Egretta ardesiaca* Black Heron R: records of small numbers Gazi, Diani, L. Jipe and L. Bilisa (MACC, DJP, TS, DAT). 1 Port Victoria 12 Feb (DJP), up to 13 Baringo Nov-mid Mar (TS, DEW) and 4 Ferguson's Gulf 23-24 Jan (TS). In Tanzania, small numbers throughout year Msaseni beach, Dar es Salaam (AJB, EMB) and 3 L. Jipe 20 Aug (KMH, CAM).

*Egretta gularis* African Reef Heron R: singles Mida 3 Jan, Ngomeni 26 Mar and Ferguson's Gulf 24 Jan (JM, DJP, TS).

CICONIIDAE: Storks

*Anastomas lamelligerus* Open-billed Stork E: 2 Nairobi NP 2 Jun (DKR).

*Ciconia episcopus* Woolly-necked Stork E: 1 Nairobi NP 10 Apr, 2 on 2 Jun and 6 on 4 Oct (DKR).

THRESKIORNITHIDAE: Ibises, spoonbills

*Plegadis falcinellus* Glossy Ibis B: c.100 pairs Bahi swamp, W of Dodoma (T) 6 Apr (CCHE).

*Platalea alba* African Spoonbill B: c.20 pairs Bahi swamp, Dodoma (T) 6 Apr (CCHE).

PHOENICOPTERIDAE: Flamingos

*Phoenicopus ruber* Greater Flamingo E: 300+ Naivasha Aug-Oct (DKR). In Uganda, 10-11 Katwe, Rwenzori NP, Oct-Nov (DEP).

*Phoeniconaias minor* Lesser Flamingo B: rafts of several thousand non-flying juveniles L. Natron (T) 28 Jun (CCHE). E: 40+ Katwe, Rwenzori NP (U), 11-13 Nov (DEP).

ANATIDAE: Ducks and geese

*Dendrocygna bicolor* Fulvous Whistling Duck N: 400+ Ahero Rice Scheme 11 Feb and 400+ L. Solai 15 Jan (DJP).

*Nettapus auritus* Pygmy Goose R: several Witu 22 Jan, and on S Kenya coast 16 Ngogoni Dam 1 Apr and 5 Ramisi 30 Sep (MACC).

Up to 10 Kihanga Dam (Mufindi, T) Sep-Dec (AJB, EMB, PJG).

ACCIPITRIDAE: Birds of Prey

*Gypohierax angolensis* Palm-nut Vulture E: seen occasionally Meru NP Sep-Dec, with one pair nest-building Oct (DKR).

*Accipiter minullus* Little Sparrowhawk E: in Tanzania, several throughout year Mufindi district (AJB, EMB), singles Msimba (Kilosa; 6:44S, 37:04E) 2, 17 and 20 Oct (LDCF) and 1 Dar es Salaam 1 Nov (AJB, EMB). In Kenya, records from Baringo 3 Feb (TS) and near Nginyang 7 Mar (JH) were unusual.

*Accipiter ovampensis* Ovampo Sparrowhawk E: 1 near Kabarnet 16 Jan (TS).

*Aquila verreauxi* Verreaux's Eagle E: in Tanzania, 2 adults and an immature Ruaha NP mid Apr (EMB); an adult and an immature Songea-Njombe Road (PS).

*Butastur rufipennis* Grasshopper Buzzard R: recorded to 2 Apr and from 18 Oct from interior E and SE Kenya; also 1 Kinangop at 2500 m on 4 Feb (DJP) and 1 Baringo 18 Mar (TS). In Tanzania, 1 Same 3 Feb (EMB); 1 Kimamba-Morogoro 1 Jan and 1 Makuyuni 2 Feb (LDCF).

*Aviceda cuculoides* Cuckoo Hawk R: singles Tigon 8 Jan (JBH, LH), Langata, Nairobi 14 Mar (DKR). In Tanzania 1-2 Msimba (Kilosa) 22, 23 and 29 Sep (LDCF).

*Chelictinia riocourii* Swallow-tailed Kite R: an unusual influx occurred in E Kenya during Jan-Mar, with parties of up to 5 birds together on coast south to Vipingo, and several records Galana Ranch (many observers). In central Kenya a roost of c.150 was present Solio Ranch 31 Mar-1 Apr (DJP). Singles Ngobit and Meru NP in Aug and Saguta Marmar in Nov; up to 4 Timau in Nov (DJP, DAT, DEW).

*Macheiramphus alcinus* Bat Hawk R: records from Diani (Feb), Shimoni (Mar), Rhamu (Jun), Mweiga (Jul), Baringo (throughout year) and Samburu (Mar-Nov) (MACC, ADL, EJ, TS). In Tanzania, a pair Usa R (Arusha) Sep (DAT).

FALCONIDAE: Falcons

*Falco alopex* Fox Kestrel R: 5+ pairs Kamathia (N Turkana) apparently prospecting nesting cliffs 25-27 Feb (ADL, DJP).

*Falco cuvieri* African Hobby E: 1 Baringo 4 Jan (TS) was unusual there. In Tanzania, 1 Mufindi 16 Dec (AJB) and 1 Kimamba (Kilosa) 11 Oct (LDCF).

*Falco rupicoloides* White-eyed Kestrel E: 1 Kamathia (N Turkana) 26 Feb (DJP).

PHASIANIDAE: Quails and francolins

*Ptilopachus petrosus* Stone Partridge E: 4+ Kongolai escarpment 24 Apr (TS). Calling Timau 9 Dec (MACC).



## TURNICIDAE: Button Quails

*Ortyxelos meiffreni* Quail Plover R: 2 Galana Ranch 12 Mar (MACC, ADL, DJP).

*Turnix sylvatica* Button Quail E: 2 6 km S of Kapedo 27 Jan (ADL, TS).

## GRUIDAE: Cranes

*Crus carunculatus* Wattled Crane R: 2 pairs 20 km W of Mbarali (T) 10 Mar (CCHE).

## RALLIDAE: Rails, crakes

*Crex egregia* African Crake R: 12 birds at night at the lights of Kilima Tea Factory (T) 25 Apr-22 May (8 on 3 May) (AJB, EMB). 1 Dar es Salaam 9 Jul (NEB, KMH, WGH).

*Gallinula angulata* Lesser Moorhen D, M: one caught at night at Ngulia 22 Dec (GCB).

*Porphyrio alleni* Allen's Gallinule R: away from Kenya coast, a few Siport (Busia) 12 May (DAT); 30+ Baringo Jan-Jun and a few Aug (DKR, TS).

*Porzana marginalis* Striped Crake R: at lights of Kilima Tea Factory (T) a female 2 May, 2 immatures 5 May and a male 28 Dec (AJB, EMB).

*Porzana pusilla* Lesser Spotted Crake R: 1 resident at the Ark, Aberdare NP during Aug (DKR).

*Sarothrura elegans* Buff-spotted Pygmy Crake R: male caught and photographed Mara River Camp, Mara GR 14 Dec (DKR).

*Sarothrura boehmi* Streaky-breasted Pygmy Crake R: 3 males and 1 female attracted to lights of Kilima Tea Factory (T) 2-5 May, and another female, in moult, on 6 Jun (AJB, EMB).

*Sarothrura rufa* Red-chested Pygmy Crake R: common and calling from swamps around Mumias, Kaimosi, Kapsabet and Timboroa 10-13 May (DAT)

## OTIDIDAE: Bustards

*Neotis denhami* Denham's Bustard R: singles Lemek, Mara GR 11 and 14 Nov (DAT). 4 Inendi (Mufindi, T) Aug-Dec (AJB, EMB).

## JACANIDAE: Jacanas

*Microparra capensis* Lesser Jacana E: resident on lakes and dams Mufindi District (T); recorded also 40 km SW of Iringa (T) (AJB, EMB, PJG).

## ROSTRATULIDAE: Painted Snipe

*Rostratula benghalensis* Painted Snipe R: records from Port Victoria (Feb), Moyale (6 birds, Mar), Nakuru (Mar) and near Mbita, Rusinga I (Feb) (LDCF, ADL, DJP, DAT).

## CHARADRIIDAE: Plovers

*Vanellus melanopterus* Black-winged Plover N: 500+ Mara GR 26 Nov (DEW).

## DROMADIDAE: Crab Plover

*Dromas ardeola* Crab Plover N: away from Mida, large counts included 220 Msambweni 4 Jan and c.90 Kipini 21-22 Jan (DJP). 1 Magadi 1 Sep is the first inland record (JBH, LH, WL).

## RECURVIROSTRIDAE: Avocets, stilts

*Recurvirostra avosetta* Avocet E: 2 at small coastal dam Likoni 21 Oct (MACC, DJP). 12 on 11 Nov and 14 on 13 Nov at Katwe, Rwenzori NP, constitutes only the second record for Uganda (DEP).

## GLAREOLIDAE: Coursers, pratincoles

*Rhinoptilis chalcopterus* Violet-tipped Courser R: 1 Ruaha NP (T) 16 Apr and 2 on 30 Jun (EMB).

## LARIDAE: Gulls, terns

*Larus cirrocephalus* Grey-headed Gull N: unusually large numbers L. Nakuru during Jan, with 5000+ counted on 14th (JHF, DJP).

*Anous stolidus* Common Noddy R: recorded off Watamu/Malindi in Feb, Apr and Nov, with 8 Watamu 10 Apr (MACC, DJP). 1 off Tiwi 9 Apr (DJP).

*Sterna albifrons* Little Tern N: c.4000 counted Sabaki Oct and Dec (DJP). c.800 in breeding plumage mid-Apr (DJP) all appeared to be of the race *saundersi*. E: inland, 1 Baringo 8-12 Dec (TS) and a few Lakes Bilisa and Shakobabo late Jan (MACC, DJP).

*Sterna anaethetus* Bridled Tern R: 20+ off Watamu 10 Apr (DAT).

*Sterna dougallii* Roseate Tern NMD: 100 in breeding plumage Tiwi 13 May, up to 90+ Galu Jul-Oct with many copulating Jul-Aug. 10 Ras Ngomeni 21 Oct and 50 off Malindi 28 Oct (MACC).

*Sterna fuscata* Sooty Tern R: an immature Ngomeni 26 Mar (MACC, DJP).

*Sterna repressa* White-cheeked Tern R: 1 Malindi 4 Jan (JM); 1 Watamu 10 Apr and up to 20 Tiwi 8-13 Apr in partial/full breeding plumage (DJP). 70 Kisite 21 Apr; 100s moving S Diani 18 Jun and 200 25 Jun; up to 10 Galu Jul-Aug (MACC). 1 Ngomeni 21 Oct and 3 Malindi 28 Dec (MACC).

## RYNCHOPIDAE: Skimmers

*Rynchops flavirostris* African Skimmer R: 40 Shakobabo 24 Jan and 20 on 25 Mar; 1 Nakuru 20 Nov; 25 Sabaki 2 Jan and 20 on 2 Dec; up to 10 frequent Baringo throughout year (MACC, TS, DEW). In Tanzania, up to 6 Ruaha Aug and Nov (AJB).

## PTEROCLIDAE: Sandgrouse

*Pterocles quadricinctus* Four-banded Sandgrouse R: 1000+ flighting to small spring at Kamathia (N Turkana) after dusk 25-26 Feb (ADL, IPJL, DJP).

*There are few recent records of this species from Kenya - see Scopus 8: 46-48.*

## COLUMBIDAE: Pigeons, doves

*Columba delegorguei* Bronze-naped Pigeon E: a juvenile Diani 5 Apr (MACC).

*Columba guinea* Speckled Pigeon N: c.200 Laisamis 8 Jun (ADL, TS).

*Streptopelia decipiens* Mourning Dove E: 1 Kampala 13-14 May (MJC).

*Treron waalia* Bruce's Green Pigeon E: 2 Rhamu 9 Jun (ADL, TS).

## CUCULIDAE: Cuckoos, coucals

*Cercococcyx montanus* Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo R: calling continuously Mufindi District (T) Jan-May and Oct-Dec (AJB, EMB).

*Clamator glandarius* Great Spotted Cuckoo R: Kenya records from Baringo and Tsavo East (Jan), Athi River (Jan and Mar), Isinya (Apr), Mwea-Tabere Rice Scheme (Apr), Nairobi (Oct), Meru (Nov) and Kitui (Dec) (JRPC, LDCF, DJP, TS, DAT). 2 Ruaha NP (T) 3 Feb (EMB). 1 Entebbe 14-15 Jan (MJC, AS).

*Clamator jacobinus* Black and White Cuckoo R: recorded Tsavo East (Jan); Athi River (Apr), Tsavo West (May), Vuma (Apr - black phase) and Ngomeni (Jun). Again in Tsavo West from 17 Nov with many Ngulia mid-Dec; also calling and displaying Kitui 9 Dec when 1 newly fledged juv seen. Nov records also from Samburu, Baringo and Meru NP (JRPC, LDCF, DJP, DAT, DEW). In Tanzania, 4 Ruaha NP 15 Apr (EMB).

*Clamator levaillantii* Levaillant's Cuckoo R: Kenya records from Bondo (Siaya) in Apr (LDCF), and from Wamba, Maralal, Mara GR, Naivasha and Watamu in Nov (DAT, DEW). Singles Ruaha NP (T) 15 Jan and 16 Apr (EMB).

*Cuculus clamosus* Black Cuckoo R: 1 Koobi Fora 13-14 Oct (FA). Recorded Kakamega Aug and Nov; calling Tsavo West mid-late Nov and in Kitui Dec. Nov records also from Isiolo, Samburu, Nakuru and Naivasha, with juv being fed by Tropical Boubou *Laniarius ferrugineus* Naivasha 3 Nov; 1 Amboseli 27 Dec (DJP, DKR, DAT, DEW). Heard 23 Oct and daily in Dec Songea-Njombe Road (T) (PS); 1 Msimba (Kilosa, T) 22 Jan (LDCF).

*Cuculus gularis* African Cuckoo R: recorded Mara CR (Jan), Ngorongoro (T), Bissel and Kajiado in Apr, Moyale (Nov) and Naivasha (Nov) (various observers).

*Cuculus poliocephalus rochii* R: singles attracted to lights Kilima Tea Factory (T) 24 Apr and 1 May (AJB, EMB).

*Pachycoccyx audeberti* Thick-billed Cuckoo R: 1 Witu 23 Jan (MACC, DJP) 1 in miombo at Msimba (Kilosa, T) 14 Oct (LDCF).

*Centropus grillii* Black Coucal R: 1 Mikumi NP (T) in breeding plumage 20 Mar (AJB, EMB).

## TYTONIDAE: Barn Owls

*Tyto capensis* Cape Grass Owl R: 1 Mufindi (T) 3 May (EMB, KMH).

## STRIGIDAE: Owls

*Otus leucotis* White-faced Scops Owl R: at least 3 pairs Baringo within 5km of each other throughout the year (TS). 1 N of Kitale 21 Nov (JRPC).

## CAPRIMULGIDAE: Nightjars

*Caprimulgus clarus* Slender-tailed Nightjar R: 7 ringed at Ngulia on 19, 21 and 23 Nov (GCB, DJP).

*Caprimulgus donaldsoni* Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar R: 6 ringed at Ngulia between 18 and 29 Nov (GCB, DJP).

*Caprimulgus inornatus* Plain Nightjar R: 6 ringed at Ngulia between 16 and 22 Nov (GCB, DJP).

*Caprimulgus tristigma* Freckled Nightjar RE: records included 1 Maralal 16 Nov, c.10 Kito Pass, NW of Baringo, 22 Mar and 1 Baringo 3 Nov (JB, TS, DEW).

*Macrodipteryx longipennis* Standard-winged Nightjar R: a male in breeding plumage Baringo 10-14 Jan (TS).

*Macrodipteryx vexillarius* Pennant-winged Nightjar R: a female Kisumu 7 Aug (DAT).

#### APODIDAE: Swifts

*Apus berliozi* Forbes-Watson's Swift R: a few over Sokoke-Mida 21 Nov (DF, DAT). c.20 all dark brown medium sized swifts with a harsh trilling call seen at Mida at dusk 15 Dec were assumed to be this species (MACC, DJP) as were up to 4 Diani last week Dec (DJP).

#### COLIIDAE: Mousebirds

*Colius leucocephalus* White-headed Mousebird E: 15+ near Tiva River, N part of Galana Ranch 11 Mar (MACC, ADL, DJP).

#### ALCEDINIDAE: Kingfishers

*Halcyon albiventris* Brown-hooded Kingfisher E: 1 Baringo 7-15 Jan (TS).

#### MEROPIDAE: Bee-eaters

*Merops hirundineus* Swallow-tailed Bee-eater D: occurred in S Tanzania (Ruaha NP, Madibera, Songea-Njombe Road, Mbuyuni-Malolo (c.7:20S, 36:30E)) from 16 Jun-25 Sep (EMB, LDCF, EA de L, PS).

*Merops nubicus* Carmine Bee-eater N: 1000+ roosting in mangroves at Mida 25 Mar (MACC, DJP).

#### CORACIIDAE: Rollers

*Coracias abyssinicus* Abyssinian Roller E: 1 at the Ark, Aberdares NP 5 Jul and 1 Nakuru 7 Jul (DKR).

*Coracias caudatus* Lilac-breasted Roller NM: the nominate race disappeared from many parts of central and eastern Kenya during the very dry early months of the year, and was replaced in these areas by the northern race *lorti*. The latter was widespread and in places common in central and SE Kenya Feb-mid Apr, south to Shimba, Kasigau, Tsavo, Emali, Kajiado and Nairobi, with 50+ seen on the Galana Ranch 10-13 Mar (MACC, ADL, DJP, DKR).

*Coracias naevia* Rufous-crowned Roller N: particularly common and widespread central and eastern Kenya during the dry period Jan-Apr (MACC, ADL, DJP et al.). E: 1 Witu 23 Jan and 1 Ngomeni 26 Mar would seem to be the first records for the coast (MACC, DJP).

#### BUCEROTIDAE: Hornbills

*Tockus pallidirostris* Pale-billed Hornbill R: 10-15 resident in miombo at Msimba (Kilosa, T) 16 Sep-31 Oct (LDCF).

*Bucorvus cafer* Ground Hornbill E: 2 Dar es Salaam 15 Jan (KMH).

PICIDAE: Woodpeckers, wrynecks

*Dendropicos poecilolaemus* Uganda Spotted Woodpecker E: 1 Usengi 24 Sep (LDCF).

*Dendropicos stierlingi* Stierling's Woodpecker R: in S Tanzania frequent in Madaba area, c.10 S 35½ E (Songea) (EMB, EA de L, PS).

*Picoides obsoletus* Brown-backed Woodpecker R: male drumming Karen 21-22 Apr, and 1 Langata 1 Oct (DKR). No other records received.

PITTIDAE: Pittas

*Pitta angolensis* African Pitta R: a total of 40 attracted to lights and caught and ringed at Kilima Tea Factory (T) 22 Apr-5 May, max. 7 in one night (AJB, EMB).

ALAUDIDAE: Larks

*Mirafra pulpa* Friedmann's Bush Lark S(B): c.6 Kamathia (N Turkana) in patchy 0.5m high grassland 26 Feb (DJP, ADL). Tens of birds in dry grassland and scattered bush 5-30 km south of Kapedo 5 Mar (DJP) remained to mid Apr (TS, DAT, JH).

HIRUNDINIDAE: Swallows

*Hirundo aethiopica* Ethiopian Swallow B: breeding at El Karama Ranch, Laikipia (LG, ADL).

*The first inland breeding record since the 1940s.*

*Hirundo atrocaerulea* Blue Swallow RD: common over grassland Mufindi District (T) up to 10 May and from 21 Sep, max 20 (EMB, AJB).

*Hirundo senegalensis* Mosque Swallow E: 1 Moyale 28 Mar (FJMcC, ADL).

CORVIDAE: Crows

*Corvus capensis* Cape Rook E: 1 10km W on Kangundo 27 Dec (ADL).

TIMALIIDAE: Babblers

*Turdoides hindei* Hinde's Pied Babbler E: 3 edge of Meru NP near Maua 3 Nov (DAT).

*Turdoides squamulatus* Scaly Babbler M: common in riverine habitat at Rhamu, mid Jun. Birds showed partially white heads and appeared intermediate between nominate birds and *T.s. carolinae* (ADL, IJPL, TS, EJR).

CAMPEPHAGIDAE: Cuckoo Shrikes

*Coracina pectoralis* White-breasted Cuckoo Shrike R: in S Tanzania, frequent near Madaba (Songea) (AJB, EMB, EA de L, PJG, PS). Also 1-2 Msimba (Kilosa) Sep-Oct and 1 Kilenjezi, E Ulugurus, Sep (LDCF).

PYCNONOTIDAE: Greenbuls

*Phyllastrephus strepitans* Northern Brownbul E: common at Moyale Jun (FJMcC, ADL).

TURDIDAE: Thrushes

*Cichladusa arquata* Morning Thrush E: 1 singing Kipini 22 Jan (MACC,DJP).

*Cercomela scotocerca* Brown-tailed Rock Chat E: a few NW of Laisamis  
11 Jan (ADL, TS). A few at Kapedo throughout the year (TS).

*Cossypha natalensis* Red-capped Robin Chat E: 3+ in forest 3 km N of  
Kabarnet (alt. 1800m) 16 Jan (TS).

*Dryocichloides lowei* Iringa Ground Robin R: 1 netted Luhoto (Mufindi  
T) 9 May, and 2 more same site 10 May (AJB, EMB, KMH).

*Dryocichloides anomalus* Olive-flanked Ground Robin R: 1 netted Luhoto  
(Mufindi, T) 11 May (AJB, EMB, KMH).

*Monticola angolensis* Miombo Rock Thrush R: common resident Mahanje  
(NW Songea, T) from Jun onwards (PJG).

*Oenanthe pileata* Capped Wheatear D: several Makambako-Njombe Road (T)  
11 Apr (EMB).

*Turdus litsipsirupa* Groundscraper Thrush RD: 1 Poroto Mts (T) Jul (ES)

SYLVIIDAE: Warblers

*Cisticola juncidis* Zitting Cisticola EN: common at Rhamu Jun (ADL,  
TS).

*Eremomela icteropygialis* Yellow-bellied Eremomela E: 1 Moyale  
18 Jul (FJMcC, ADL).

*Heliolais erythroptera* Red-winged Warbler R: E Tanzanian records from  
Mahanje area (NW Songea, T) May, Nov, Dec and Msimba (Kilosa, T)  
where quite common Jan and Sep-Oct (LDCF, PJG, PS).

*Hyliota flavigaster* Yellow-bellied Hyliota R: Tanzanian records  
from Mahanje Madaba area (NW Songea) Jul-Oct and Msimba (Kilosa)  
Sep (LDCF, EA de L, PS).

*Sylvietta isabellina* Somali Long-billed Crombec E: several N edge of  
Galana Ranch 11-12 Mar (MACC, ADL, DJP).

MUSCICAPIDAE: Flycatchers

*Melaenornis edolioides* Black Flycatcher B: an adult feeding two juvs  
Moyale Jun (FJMcC, ADL).

*First confirmed Kenya breeding of the race schistacea.*

*Muscicapa gambagae* Gambaga Flycatcher S(B): 1 NE border Galana Ranch  
12 Mar (MACC, ADL, DJP).

*Muscicapa chapini* Chapin's Flycatcher R: further records from usual  
site at Kakamega 15 Jul and 10 Nov (TS, DAT).

*Myopornis boehmi* Böhm's Flycatcher S(B): recorded in S Tanzania from  
miombo woodland at Madaba in the Mahanje area (NW Songea) Jul-Aug  
(AJB, EMB, PJG).

*Batis orientalis* Grey-headed Batis R: 2 NW of Laisamis 11 Jun (ADL,  
TS).

*Erannornis albicauda* White-tailed Blue Flycatcher RB: a pair  
building at Karatu (T) 16 Sep (DAT).

## MOTACILLIDAE: Wagtails, pipits

*Anthus similis* Long-billed Pipit E: several Kamathia (N Turkana) Feb (ADL, DJP).

*Tmetothylacus tenellus* Golden Pipit E: singles at Koritei 27 Nov and between Nginyang and Loruk 16 Apr were well W of the normal range (JH).

## MALACONOTIDAE: Bush Shrikes

*Dryoscopus pringlii* Pringle's Puffback E: 2 Dachadima, N part of Galana Ranch 13 Mar (DJP, MACC).

*Laniarius mufumbiri* Papyrus Gonolek R: several calling and 1 seen Usengi 12 Feb (DJP) and 1 on 24 Sep (LDCF).

*Laniarius ruficeps* Rufous-naped Bush Shrike R: 2 pairs found Dachadima, N part of Galana Ranch, 10-13 Mar (DJP, MACC). A few 5 km E of Ngulia airstrip Tsavo West NP, mid Nov-early Dec (DJP, JHF, MGK).

## LANIIDAE: Shrikes

*Corvinella melanoleuca* Magpie Shrike M: 4 Cottars' Camp, Mara GR 1 Dec (DAT).

*Lanius somalicus* Somali Fiscal E: recorded from Baragoi northwards to South Horr early Nov (AEB, DJP). A few apparently resident Kapedo (TS).

*Lanius souzae* Souza's Shrike R: records from S Tanzania in the Madaba-Mahanje area (NW Songea) Jun-Sep (EMB, EA de L, PS, PJG).

## PRIONOPIDAE: Helmet Shrikes

*Prionops scopifrons* Chestnut-fronted Helmet Shrike E: 10 Mgongoni, Ugweno, N Pare Mts (T) at 1200 m 20 Aug (KMH, CAM).

## STURNIDAE: Starlings

*Spreo shelleyi* Shelley's Starling E: 2 near McKinnon Road 19 Aug (DAT) were at the southern limit of their range.

## NECTARINIIDAE: Sunbirds

*Nectarinia habessinica* Shining Sunbird RE: resident at Kapedo (TS). A few at Ramu 10 Jun (ADL, IJPL, TS).

*Nectarinia manoensis* Miombo Double-collared Sunbird R: male Mufindi District (T) 16 Dec (AJB).

*Nectarinia nectarinioides* Smaller Black-bellied Sunbird E: a few Ramu 10 Jun (ADL, TS).

*Nectarinia pembae* Violet-breasted Sunbird E: common in northern parts of the Galana Ranch 10-13 Mar (ADL, DJP, MACC).

## PLOCEIDAE: Weavers

*Anaplectes rubriceps* Red-headed Weaver E: 1 6 km W of Kisumu 25 Nov (JHF, TS).

*Ploceus auranteus* Orange Weaver R: 1 6 km W of Kisumu 25 Nov (JHF, TS)..

*Ploceus oliveiceps* Olive-headed Golden Weaver R: pair Madaba (T) 23 Oct (EA de L).

*Ploceus superciliosus* Compact Weaver R: a group near Port Victoria  
12 Feb (DJP, JHF), 1 near Kakamega 7 Aug (DAT) and 1 Usengi 24  
Sep (LDCF).

*Quelea erythrops* Red-headed Quelea B: colonies E and NE of Kilosa  
7 May (CCHE).

*Plocepasser superciliosus* Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver BE: several  
pairs breeding Kampi ya Kavuli, E shore L. Turkana 9 Oct (CF).

*Passer castanopterus* Somali Sparrow R: 14 Korr 8 Jun (ADL, TS); 25-30  
Laisamis 11 Jun (ADL, TS); 30-100+ at Kapado throughout year (JH,  
TS).

*These are the only two sites in Kenya where the species is known  
as a town resident.*

*Passer domesticus* House Sparrow E: a few pairs now resident in main-  
land Tanzania at Dar es Salaam (KMH, CAM).

*Vidua hypocherina* Steel-blue Whydah E: 1 Ramu 10 Jun (ADL, IJPL, EJL,  
TS). At least 2 males 30 km S of Kitui 9 Dec (DJP).

*Vidua obtusa* Broad-tailed Paradise Whydah R: male in breeding plumage  
in miombo at Madaba (NW Songea, T) 18 Jul (EMB).

ESTRILDIDAE: Waxbills, etc.

*Pyrenestes minor* Lesser Seed-cracker E: 5+ Luhoto Dam (Mufindi, T)  
31 Dec (EMB).

FRINGILLIDAE: Buntings, canaries, seed-eaters

*Emberiza striolata* House Bunting E: common on rocky hillsides at  
Kamathia (N Turkana) late Feb (ADL, IJPL, DJP).

*There are practically no previous records from Kenya W of Lake  
Turkana.*

*Serinus menelli* Black-eared Seed-eater E: recorded regularly in small  
groups in miombo along the Njombe-Songea road (T) Jun-Dec (EMB, NEB,  
PJG, EA de L, PS).

*Serinus reichardi* Stripe-breasted Seed-eater R: S Tanzanian records:  
Mahanje and Madaba (NW Songea) (PJG, EA de L).

#### PALAEARCTIC SPECIES

*Ciconia nigra* Black Stork R: records of 1-2 Nairobi NP up to 7 Apr  
and from 15 Oct, and 3 Athi River 3 Apr; singles Kapado Mar and Nov  
and Mara GR 23 Oct-Dec (JHF, JH, DJP, DKR, DAT). ED: 1 Baringo  
25 Aug (TS). In Tanzania, 1 Ngorongoro 1 Apr (JRPC).

*Anas acuta* Pintail N: c.800 Solai 15 Jan; c.1400 Makuyu 29 Jan (DJP).  
E: singles Witu 23 Jan and Shakababo 24 Jan (MACC, DJP).

*Anas clypeata* Shoveler ND: c.4000 NE corner L. Nakuru Jan had mostly  
departed mid Feb; c.2200 already back there by 27 Oct, reaching  
well over 5000 by end of year (JHF, DJP, DAT).

*Anas crecca* Teal R: very few records: 2+ Solai 11 Jan, 1 Ahero 11 Feb  
and 2 Naivasha 31 Dec (DJP, JHF, DKR).



- Anas penelope* Wigeon R: few records: 3+ Solai 15 Jan, 1 Ol Bolossat 28 Jan and 5 there 18 Feb and 3 Mar, 1 Ahero 11 Feb, 1 Mara GR 14 Dec and 1 Ol Bolossat 15 Dec (MACC, JHF, DJP).
- Anas querquedula* Garganey N: c.3000 Makuyu 29 Jan; c.1200 Ahero Rice Scheme 11 Feb (JHF, DJP).
- Aythya fuligula* Tufted Duck R: singles Maralal 6 Mar (DJP) and Nakuru 21 Nov (DEW).
- Circus macrourus* Pallid Harrier D: early birds at Kapedo 28 Sep (JH) and Dandora 29 Sep (DJP). A late bird Makambako (Njombe, T) 11 Apr (AJB, EMB).
- Circus pygargus* Montagu's Harrier N: very common at Kamathia (N Turkana) with over 20 present late Feb (DJP, ADL). D: early bird at Kapedo 18 Sep (JH). Late birds Vanga (S coast) 11 Apr and Athi Plains 15 Apr (DJP, MACC).
- Aquila pomarina* Lesser Spotted Eagle R: recorded in Kenya to 13 Feb and from 30 Oct, with winter (Jan-Feb) records from Nakuru, Kinangop Njoro, Kericho and Baringo (AEB, JHF, DJP, DKR, TS, DEW). In Tanzania, 17 at termite hatch Ngwasi (Mufindi) 22 Mar (AJB, EMB), and singles Msimba (Kilosa) 16 and 19 Oct (LDCF).
- Buteo buteo* Common Buzzard D: first autumn bird Nairobi 26 Sep (DJP).
- Hieraaetus pennatus* Booted Eagle R: 20 records of 1-2 birds from Kenya mostly N and E of the highlands, up to 22 Feb and from 20 Oct (many observers). Also 1 Entebbe (U) 14 Jan (MJC, AS); singles Songea-Njombe (T) 28 Oct and 7 Nov (PS).
- Pernis apivorus* Honey Buzzard R: singles Kampala 5, 12 and 18 Oct (MJC). 1 Sokoke 4 Dec (DEW); 1 Kakamega 7 Aug (WR, DAT) was presumably overwintering.
- Falco amurensis* Eastern Red-footed Falcon R: 60+ Ngwasi (Mufindi, T) 22 Mar (AJB, EMB). 3 Nairobi NP 23 Mar (DKR) and 2 Mrima Hill (S coast) 11 Apr (MACC, DJP). Flocks of up to c.80 near Ngulia, Tsavo West NP, 17-25 Nov (several observers).
- Falco concolor* Sooty Falcon R: 1 Makuyu 29 Apr (DJP). Singles Mountain Lodge, Kiganjo 2 Nov, Meru NP 4 Nov and Ngulia 24 and 26 Nov (MACC, DJF, MGK, DJP, DAT).
- Falco naumanni* Lesser Kestrel E: 3 E of Garsen 21 Jan; 50+ Vipingo 10 Mar. D: a late flock of c.20 Mwea-Tabere Rice Scheme 29 Apr (DJP). This species is unusual at the coast.
- Falco peregrinus calidus* Peregrine R: at coast, singles Malindi 4 Jan and Shimoni 23 Dec presumed to have been this race (MACC).
- Falco eleonora* Eleonora's Falcon S(B): 1 Kapedo 27 Jan (ADL, TS) is the first 'winter' record. 2 Mountain Lodge 2 Nov (DAT, DF) and 1 L. Baringo 19 Dec.
- Falco subbuteo* Hobby N: 60+ Ngwasi (Mufindi, T) 22 Mar (AJB, EMB). D: a late bird Nairobi NP 6 May (DAT).

*Crex crex* Corncrake R: singles Ngulia 17 Nov (DJP) and 22 Dec (GCB).  
1 attracted to lights Kilima Tea Factory (T) 22 Mar and another  
26 Nov (AJB, EMB).

*Haematopus ostralegus* Oystercatcher R: 1-2 Galu Beach Jan-Feb, and  
1 Kipini 22 Jan (MACC, DJP).

*Charadrius alexandrinus* Kentish Plover S(B): c.10 Ferguson's Gulf  
23-25 Jan (TS). 1 L. Nakuru 10 Feb (JHF, DJP). 2-3 Kipini 21-22  
Jan and 1 on small dam at Likoni 21 Oct (MACC, DJP).

*This species appears to be an annual winter visitor to Ferguson's Gulf, but including the above there are still only nine records (all Kenyan) from elsewhere. These are the first definite records from the coast.*

*Charadrius dubius* Little Ringed Plover R: records from central and  
eastern Kenya to 20 Mar and from 4 Nov with max 20+ Tana Bridge  
19 Feb (several observers). Also 1 Moyale 27 Mar (ADL).

*Pluvialis dominica* Lesser Golden Plover S(B): 5 L. Bilisa 23 Jan  
(MACC, DJP).

*Limosa lapponica* Bar-tailed Godwit R: 1 Mida 3 Jan and 2 there 25  
Mar (several observers). Records of up to 4 Kenya coast Sep-Dec,  
also 1 Kunduchi Beach, Dar es Salaam 19 Sep. E: inland, 1  
Ferguson's Gulf 24 Jan (TS).

*Limosa limosa* Black-tailed Godwit R: 33 L. Shakababo and 8 L. Bilisa  
23 Jan (MACC, DJP). Up to 3 Naivasha Jan-Feb and 1 Solai 15 Jan  
(DJP). c.40 Ahero Rice Scheme 11 Feb (JHF, DJP). Singles Sabaki  
2 Jan and 21 Oct (MACC, DJP).

*Numenius arquata* Curlew M: recorded on coast away from Mida at  
Kipini, Sabaki mouth and Diani; southward coastal passage of odd  
birds noted Diani 31 Jul-21 Sep (MACC).

*Numenius phaeopus* Whimbrel E: inland, 6 at Katwe, Rwenzori NP (U)  
11 Nov (DEP).

*Tringa erythropus* Spotted Redshank R: many at Dandora OPs early in  
the year with max 45 on 8 Feb, decreasing to 6 on 22 Mar (several  
observers). At Ahero Rice Scheme, c.145 counted 11 Feb (JHF, DJP).  
Elsewhere, small numbers Jan-Feb and 1 in breeding plumage Magadi  
26-27 May (DEGB, DJP).

*Tringa totanus* Redshank R: regular at Mida, max 10 in Dec (several  
observers). Elsewhere, 1 Malindi 4 Dec (DEW), 1 Ahero Rice Scheme  
11 Feb (JHF, DJP).

*Tringa stagnatilis* Marsh Sandpiper N: 400+ Ahero Rice Scheme 11 Feb  
(JHF, DJP).

*Xenus cinereus* Terek N: on S Kenya coast c.125 Galu Beach 4 Jan and  
c.130 25 Dec, c.70 Msambweni 4 Jan (DJP). E: inland, 1 L. Nakuru  
21 Nov (DEW).

*Gallinago gallinago* Common Snipe D: a late bird Limuru 6 May (DJP).

*Gallinago media* Great Snipe R: 1 L. Bilisa 23 Jan (MACC, DJP).  
1 attracted to lights at night, Ngulia 21 Nov (LDCF, MGK, DJP).

*Lymnocyrtus minimus* Jack Snipe R: 1 L. Naivasha 15 Jan (DJP).

*Calidris alba* Sanderling E: one L. Naivasha 6 May (DJP).  
Inland records of coastal waders are unusual in spring.

*Calidris subminuta* Long-toed Stint S(A): 1 Dandora OPs 20-22 Feb (ADL, DJP, DAT). 1 Malindi harbour 21 Nov (DJF, DAT, RFR et al.).  
The fourth and fifth records for Kenya and East Africa and the first since 1974. There is no previous record from the coast.

*Calidris temminckii* Temminck's Stint R: records of small numbers central Kenya up to 21 Mar and from 27 Oct. Also 1 Ahero 26 Feb (LDCF) and 1 Mida 19 Oct (MACC, DJP).

*Limicola falcinellus* Broad-billed Sandpiper R: Max at Sabaki mouth c.65 on 15 Dec (MACC, DJP). Elsewhere, 2-3 Kipini 22 Jan and 1 caught Mida 16 Dec (DEGB, MACC, DJP).

*Philomachus pugnax* Ruff N: c.3000 Tana Bridge 29 Jan (DJP).

*Phalaropus lobatus* Red-necked Phalarope R: 24 Ferguson's Gulf 24 Jan (TS). A few Shimoni 3-6 Feb (PH, MH). c.200 at sea off Malindi 12 Feb and tens 28 Dec (MACC).

*Burhinus oedicephalus* Stone Curlew R: single birds Baringo 2 Jan and 25 Feb (DKR, TS, DAT).

*Larus argentatus* Herring Gull R: up to 40+ Malindi Jan and c.30 there early Dec (MACC, DJP, DEW). An adult *heuglini* L. Nakuru 27 Oct (DJP). In Uganda, 5 grey-backed birds Kakindu, L. Victoria 21 Oct (MJC, PV).

*Larus genei* Slender-billed Gull S(B): 2 adults Kipini 22 Dec (MACC, DJP). At least 6 adults L. Nakuru 14 Jan (JHF, DJP) and an immature there 28 Jan (ADL). 2 adults Ferguson's Gulf 24 Jan (TS).  
There is only one previous record from the coast.

*Larus ichthyaetus* Great Black-headed Gull S(B): 2 Malindi and another 2 Sabaki mouth first week Jan (JM et al.). An unprecedented count of 26 at Ferguson's Gulf 23-25 Jan (TS). Otherwise, 2 Dandora OPs 7 Jan (FN, DJP) and 1 Malindi 12 Feb and 9 Apr (MACC, DJP). These records all refer to sub-adult birds.

*Larus ridibundus* Black-headed Gull RN: c.130 L. Nakuru 14 Jan (JHF, DJP); otherwise records of small numbers from Nakuru, Naivasha, Dandora OPs, Malindi, Sabaki, L. Shikababo and Kipini (several observers). In Uganda, 1 Katwe, Rwenzori NP 13 Nov (DEP).

*Gelochelidon nilotica* Gull-billed Tern N: counts of c.800 L. Nakuru 14 Jan, 400 Kipini 21-22 Jan, 130 Mida 19 Oct and 180 Mida 16 Dec (MACC, DJP).

*Sterna hirundo* Common Tern RND: recorded on coast in all months; largest numbers on both N and S coasts late Sep-Nov, with max 4000 Ngomeni reef 21 Oct and 4000 Sabaki mouth same day.

*Sterna sandvicensis* Sandwich Tern S(B): a party of 30 Kipini 21-22 Jan (MACC, DJP). 1 Ngomeni in non-breeding plumage 2 Jun (MACC, DJP).

*There would seem to be no previous records of flocks on the East African seaboard north of southern Mozambique.*

*Cuculus poliocephalus* Lesser Cuckoo R: 1 Diani 9 Apr (DJP) and 1 Sokoke Forest 21 Nov (DJF, DAT) - both presumed nominate race.

*Caprimulgus europaeus* Eurasian Nightjar R: several spring records from the coast: 1 caught and several others seen and presumed this species Murere (Kwale) 18 Mar (MACC), 2 dead on road Malindi-Kilifi 26 Mar and 1 Galu 27 Mar (MACC, DJP), 3 Galu 2 Apr (MACC) and 2 dead on road Shimba Hills 10 Apr (DJP). Regularly seen Ngulia 16-25 Nov (max caught 6 per night) and 1 there 1 Dec (MGK, DJP, DAT).

*Merops apiaster* Eurasian Bee-eater ND: hundreds at Dar es Salaam 10 Apr (KMH).

*Apus apus* Eurasian Swift N: many thousands Mara GR 27 Nov (DEW).

*Upupa epops* Hoopoe R: birds of the nominate race recorded as usual at Baringo; also 1 Kamathia (N Turkana) 26 Feb, Athi River 6 Oct, South Horr 5 Nov (DJP, TS).

*Oenanthe deserti* Desert Wheatear S(A): 2 full plumage males at Kiunga 17 Feb (GCB). To be documented in *Scopus*.

*This constitutes a new species for East Africa. It has been recorded in Somalia to about 1 N.*

*Oenanthe hispanica* Black-eared Wheatear S(A): a first year male of the race *melanoleuca* at Athi River 23 Mar-5 Apr was caught, ringed and photographed (DJP, DEGB, DKR).

*The first acceptable record for East Africa - see Scopus 8: 50-51.*

*Oenanthe isabellina* Isabelline Wheatear D: c.10 Athi Plains Isinya-Kajiado 15 Apr were unusually late (DJP).

*Oenanthe pleschanka* Pied Wheatear M: a white-throated adult male Nairobi NP 23 Mar (DKR). D: 1 Baringo 19 Apr was very late (TS).

*Saxicola rubetra* Whinchat ED: Kenya records as usual from Nyanza, Mara GR and the central rift valley highlands; also 1 Kamathia (N Turkana) 25 Feb, 1 Kapedo 8 Apr, 1 Meru NP 4 Nov (JH, ADL, DAT). In E Tanzania, 1 Mikumi NP 20 Mar and 1 Ngwasi (Mufindi) 14 Nov (AJB, EMB).

*Acrocephalus arundinaceus* Great Reed Warbler R: common (20+ found) Port Victoria 12 Feb, 1 Tana Bridge 20 Feb, singles Athi River 12-18 Apr, up to 12+ Baringo early-mid Apr, 1-3+ Kariobangi, Nairobi 26 Apr-8 May, one remaining to 21 May (DJP, TS) and several South Horr late Apr (YM-C). Singles Baringo 20 Nov and Ngulia 21 Nov (DJP, DEW).

*Acrocephalus griseldis* Basra Reed Warbler R: a few L. Bilisa 23-24 Jan (DJP). 2-3 Baringo 10-12 Apr (TS). Recorded Ngulia 18 Nov-22 Dec, and 35 ringed (GCB, MGK, DJP).

*The first occurrence in spring rift valley passage movements, and the first record from western Kenya. There are three autumn records from Uganda.*

*Acrocephalus palustris* Marsh Warbler E: no wintering records in the dry conditions of Jan-Mar. Widespread in small numbers at the coast 8-12 Apr, recorded from Diani, Galu, Kikambala, Takaungu, Shimba and Tiwi. 1 Athi River 15 Apr and 1-2 Kariobangi, Nairobi, 26 Apr-8 May (DJP). In Nov singles recorded from new passage localities at South Horr 5 Nov (AEB, DJP) and Loyengalani 7 Nov (GCB).

*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Sedge Warbler DM: a particularly heavy northward passage through central Kenya mid Apr-early May (including Nakuru, Baringo, Naivasha and the Nairobi/Thika areas). Birds remained until 21 May at Limuru and 24 May at Kariobangi (DJP).

*Acrocephalus scirpaceus* Reed Warbler D: unusually late birds at Baringo 11 May and Limuru 19 May (DJP, TS).

*Hippolais icterina* Icterine Warbler R: 1 caught and ringed Ngulia 29 Nov (GCB, JHF, MCK).

*Only the third record from this site.*

*Hippolais languida* Upcher's Warbler E: singles at Kamathia (N Turkana) 26 Feb and Kapedo 5 Mar (DJP) and Moyale 27 Mar (ADL) were from new localities; 1 Baringo 2 Feb and up to 5 daily mid-late Feb were unusual (TS). N: very abundant Galana Ranch mid Mar (DJP), with over 100 seen in one day in the northeast.

*Hippolais olivetorum* Olive-tree Warbler R: 1-2 Maralal 4 Nov (AEB, DJP). 22 caught and ringed Ngulia 18-29 Nov and 2 there on the unusually late date of 22 Dec (GCB, MGK, DJP).

*Locustella fluviatilis* River Warbler R: 70 ringed Ngulia 16 Nov-22 Dec (GCB, MGK, DJP). 1 10 km N of Kitui 9 Dec (DJP).

*Phylloscopus collybita* Chiffchaff R: 3 Kabarnet Forest 16 Jan (JHF, TS) and 2-3 singing Aberdares NP early Feb (BL).

*Phylloscopus trochilus* Willow Warbler M: exceptional passage central Kenya early-mid Apr, apparently the heaviest since 1971 and presumably associated with the dry conditions (many observers). D: a late bird El Karama Ranch (Laikipia) 15-16 May (ADL).

*Sylvia communis* Whitethroat E: birds in unusual localities at Kapedo 29 Feb and 5 Mar (JH) and Kikambala 12 Apr (DJP).

*Sylvia nisoria* Barred Warbler NE: unusually large numbers Baringo Jan-mid Mar, and also common in *Salvadora* thicket Nginyang-Kapedo 5 Mar (TS, DJP). 1 Kapedo to 17 Mar (JH). Quite common Dachadima, N part Galana Ranch, mid Mar (DJP). E: several South Horr 5 Nov (AEB, DJP).

*Ficedula* sp. R: 1 Nairobi 8 Sep (ADL) and 1 Kampala 2 Oct (MJC) were presumed to have been Collared Flycatchers *F. albicollis*.

*Anthus campestris* Tawny Pipit S(B): 1 Baringo 13 Jan (TS) and 1 Meru NP 5 Nov (DF, DAT). Full details received.

*The eighth and ninth East African records.*

*Anthus trivialis* Tree Pipit E: 1 Mida 26 Mar (DJP).

*There seems to be no previous record from the coast.*

*Motacilla alba* White Wagtail RE: records away from usual sites:

4 L. Shakobabo and 1 L. Bilisa 23-24 Jan, 10 Kiunga 17 Feb,

1 Kapedo 5 Mar and 1 Maralal 6 Mar (GCB, MACC, DJP).

*Motacilla cinerea* Grey Wagtail E: 1 Mida 20 Oct (MACC, DJP).

*Motacilla flava* Yellow Wagtail D: 1 10 km N of Kapedo 10 Jun (JH).

*Lanius minor* Lesser Grey Shrike D: a first year bird Meru NP 3-4 Nov (DJF, DAT). A late bird El Karama Ranch (Laikipia) 14 May (ADL).

*Lanius nubicus* Nubian Shrike S(A): 1 Baringo up to early Mar and also a second bird 10-14 Jan (TS, ADF-W et al.).

*The third and fourth records for Kenya and East Africa.*

*Lanius senator* Woodchat Shrike S(B): up to 7 present Baringo 1-15 Jan with 1 remaining to 4 Mar (TS et al.). 1 Isiolo 18 Feb IJF-L et al.

*The numbers present together at Baringo in the 1983/84 winter are unprecedented in Kenya.*

#### ADDITIONS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS

##### AFROTROPICAL AND OCEANIC SPECIES

*Sula sula* Red-footed Booby S(A): 1 seen at very close range on the sea off Shimoni 24 Jan 1983 (PH, MH). Full details received.

*This constitutes the third record for Kenya and also for Africa.*

*Ardea rufiventris* Rufous-bellied Heron R: 2 on flooded plain Windi (T) 27 Jul 1983 (ES).

*Egretta ardosiaca* Black Heron R: 2 Lugugaa, L. Rukwa (T) 5 Apr 1982 (ES).

*Hirundo atrocaerulea* Blue Swallow R: several present Poroto Mts (T) 10-15 Aug 1980 (ES).

*Bias musicus* Black and White Flycatcher R: a pair Bigua, Morogoro (T) 15 Nov 1982 (ES).

*Erranornis albicauda* White-tailed Blue Flycatcher R: 1 Poroto Mts (T) 26 Dec 1983 (ES).

*Vidua obtusa* Broad-tailed Paradise Whydah R: 1 Poroto Mts (T) at 1700 m 13 May 1982 (ES).

##### PALAEARCTIC

*Chlidonias niger* Black Tern S(A): 1 Thika OPs 5 Feb 1983 (DJP)

*The fourth Kenya and East African record.*

'FIRST' AND 'LAST' DATES FOR SOME PALAEARCTIC MIGRANT LANDBIRDS  
(central/eastern Kenya except where marked \*)

Species	Last Date	First Date
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	28 Apr Athi R.	
<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	10 Apr Shimba Hills	
<i>Merops apiaster</i>	18 Apr Athi R.	17 Sep Baringo
<i>Merops persicus</i>		31 Oct Magadi Rd.
<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	28 Apr Athi R.	27 Oct Gilgil
<i>Upupa epops epops</i>		6 Oct Athi R.
<i>Delichon urbica</i>	27 Apr Baringo	27 Sep Mau Narok
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	8 May Kariobangi	
<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	14 Apr Tiwi	5 Nov Nyaharuru Meru NP
<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	12 Apr Kikambala	16 Nov Ngulia
<i>Irania gutturalis</i>		5 Nov Meru NP
<i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	17 Apr Kariobangi	11 Nov Kindaruma
<i>L. megarhynchos</i>	12 Apr Vuma, Takaungu	5 Nov Meru NP
<i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	22 Apr Kariobangi	27 Oct Ngulia
<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	15 Apr Athi Plains	29 Sep Dandora
<i>O. oenanthe</i>	19 Apr Thika	18 Sep *Serengeti
<i>O. pleschanka</i>	19 Apr Baringo	31 Oct Magadi Rd.
<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		26 Sep Nakuru
<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	21 May Kariobangi	21 Nov Ngulia
<i>A. griseldis</i>	12 Apr Baringo	14 Nov Mara GR
<i>A. palustris</i>	8 May Kariobangi	3 Nov Mountain Lodge
<i>A. schoenobaenus</i>	24 May Kariobangi	9 Nov Ahero
<i>A. scirpaceus</i>	19 May Limuru	7 Nov Baringo
<i>Hippolais languida</i>	15 Apr Kajiado	22 Nov Ngulia
<i>H. olivetorum</i>		4 Nov Maralal
<i>H. pallida</i>	19 Apr Thika	25 Sep Baringo
<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>		16 Nov Ngulia
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	16 May El Karama Ranch	6 Oct Athi R.
<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		20 Oct Langata
<i>S. borin</i>	15 Apr Bissel	
<i>S. communis</i>	22 Apr Kariobangi	27 Oct Ngulia
<i>S. nisoria</i>	17 Apr Kariobangi	28 Oct Baringo
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	15 Apr Athi R.	6 Oct Athi R.
<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	22 Apr Kariobangi	28 Oct Baringo
<i>A. trivialis</i>	14 Apr Nakuru	10 Oct *Serengeti
<i>Motacilla alba</i>	6 Mar Maralal	
<i>M. cinerea</i>		20 Oct Mida
<i>M. flava</i>	8 May Kariobangi (10 Jun Kapedo)	17 Sep *Ngorongoro
<i>Lanius collurio</i>	1 May Nairobi NP	30 Oct Nairobi NP
<i>L. isabellinus</i>	15 Apr Kajiado	27 Oct Tsavo W NP
<i>L. minor</i>	14 May El Karama Ranch	3 Nov Meru NP

\* Tanzanian localities

English names of birds listed above but not mentioned in the Species Report: *Cuculus canorus* Eurasian Cuckoo, *Merops persicus* Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, *Coracias garrulus* Eurasian Roller, *Delichon urbica* House Martin, *Riparia riparia* Sand Martin, *Oriolus oriolus* Golden Oriole, *Cercotrichas galactotes* Rufous Bush Chat, *Irania gutturalis* Irania, *Luscinia luscinia* Sprosser, *L. megarhynchos* Nightingale, *Monticola saxatilis* Rock Thrush, *Oenanthe oenanthe* Northern Wheatear, *Hippolais pallida* Olivaceous Warbler, *Sylvia atricapilla* Blackcap, *S. borin* Garden Warbler, *Muscicapa striata* Spotted Flycatcher, *Lanius collurio* Red-backed Shrike and *L. isabellinus* Red-tailed Shrike.

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#### 'REQUESTED' AND 'SPECIAL ATTENTION' SPECIES

Guidance on what records to submit for the East African Bird Report is given in the *Scopus* Supplement of June 1982, copies of which still may be obtained free of charge from D.A. Turner, Box 48019 Nairobi. The response from observers to the present report is most encouraging and shows that the Supplement is doing its job, so that the annual reports, coupled with *Birds of East Africa* and the forthcoming *Bird atlas for Kenya*, will serve as a full record of the status of the East African avifauna during the 1980s and, hopefully, beyond.

For 1985 and 1986 we intend to make a special effort to obtain the fullest information on a number of species, mostly already in the Requested (R) category, and we urge observers to record and send in all such records during the next two years. A list of these birds



follows but does not, of course, supplant the full list of 'R' species

*Dendrocygna bicolor* Fulvous Whistling Duck  
*Dendrocygna viduata* White-faced Whistling Duck  
*Circus macrourus* Pallid Harrier  
*Circus pygarrus* Montagu's Harrier  
*Butastur rufipennis* Grasshopper Buzzard  
*Chelictinia riocourii* Swallow-tailed Kite  
*Neotis denhami* Denham's Bustard  
*Charadrius asiaticus* Caspian Plover  
*Clamator glandarius* Great Spotted Cuckoo  
*Clamator jacobinus* Black and White Cuckoo  
*Clamator levaillantii* Levaillant's Cuckoo  
*Cuculus canorus* Eurasian Cuckoo  
*Cuculus clamosus* Black Cuckoo  
*Cuculus gularis* African Cuckoo  
*Caprimulgus* spp. } nightjars, records of all species as  
*Macrodipteryx* spp. } well as special attention to road kills  
*Coracias caudata lortii* lilac-throated race of the Lilac-breasted Roller  
*Pitta angolensis* African Pitta  
*Mirafra cantillans* Singing Bush Lark  
*Oenanthe pileata* Capped Wheatear  
*Saxicola rubetra* Whinchat - from all areas of East Africa  
*Tmetothylacus tenellus* Golden Pipit

Records of these species should be sent in the normal way to the recorders early in 1986 and early in 1987.

#### RARE BIRDS

Records of birds new for any of the three East African countries Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and 'S(A)' species (those recorded in East Africa five or fewer times) should be sent in to Dr D.J. Pearson with full details, including photographs if available, and the name or names of any other people present at the time, as soon after the observation was made for circulation amongst the members of the East African Rare Birds Committee.

It would be much appreciated if details could be sent in duplicate. Photocopies of original field notebook descriptions and sketches will be most useful for straight sight records.

NOCTURNAL AFROTROPICAL MIGRANTS AT  
MUFINDI, SOUTHERN TANZANIA

A.J. Beakbane and E.M. Boswell

The first reliable instance of a migrant bird appearing at lights in the Mufindi area of southern Tanzania occurred in May 1962 when a local resident reported seeing a 'most beautiful' bird lying stunned below a lighted window in the early morning. The species was the African Pitta *Pitta angolensis* and it had been grounded whilst migrating at night in the thick mist that prevails over the area during the rainy months of March, April and May. Mufindi is situated in the south-western part of the Uzungwa Mountains in southern Tanzania and much of the area lies above 1800 m. The escarpment edge of the mountains runs approximately east to west presenting a climatic and geographical barrier of over 600 m to migratory birds travelling north to non-breeding grounds nearer the equator. While the escarpment edge itself supports some large tracts of natural rain forest, much of it protected Forest Reserve, the land behind the scarp is all under cultivation, mainly tea and eucalyptus plantations, and only remnants of the original forest still exist in small pockets among the tea.

Three tea factories serve the area and one of these, Kilima (8:36S, 35:22E) is situated at 2000 m on a prominent ridge approximately 4 km from the escarpment edge, providing the first point of reference for the birds as they gain altitude to negotiate the scarp. Misty conditions are encountered with the rise in altitude and the birds are attracted to the only brightly lit area in the vicinity. It has been well known locally for many years that small numbers of birds are grounded within the factory compound when mist occurs but neither numbers nor species have been recorded. Until this study began factory watchmen collected the birds for eating and we have been compelled to offer recompense for the loss of protein to encourage watchmen to hand birds in.

In 1982 a ringing station was set up in the Mufindi area and a study of the migrant birds entering the factory begun. East African Natural History Society Rings are used and financial assistance was offered from the Ornithological Sub-Committee and the Society's Migration Fund. The grant was used to increase the intensity of light at the factory and at a garden site a kilometre south of the factory with a view to attracting greater numbers of birds. The factory site is extremely exposed and conditions during the hours of darkness when mist and rain are heavy can cause numerous bird casualties. Temperatures reach as low as 3 deg C and strong winds augment the chill factor. Birds perish very quickly in these conditions if they do not find cover and as a result, once grounded, quickly make for the many drains that surround the buildings. Catching the birds can be difficult in these circumstances and most are picked up by hand from the drains and

torches are used to locate them. Attempts have been made to trap birds using mist-net but these have proved difficult to use in high winds and have to be checked very regularly to ensure that trapped birds do not die as a result of exposure. The vegetation surrounding the factory site is not suitable for a mist-netting programme and birds have usually resumed their migration at first light.

## RESULTS

The results for 1982 are presented in Table 1. During March, April and May of 1982 the project was still in its infancy and at this stage all birds were being caught irregularly by factory staff. Ringing did not begin in the area until October, although data, including plumage details, were recorded for these unringed birds. Mist during November is unpredictable but perfect conditions occurred in the middle of the month to yield eight African Pittas over a four-day period. These and all subsequent birds caught were ringed. Bird arrivals at the factory coincide with the moon's dark phases and most occur during the week each side of the new moon, providing weather conditions are also favourable. Mist can appear at any time during the night and varies considerably in duration and density making it difficult to predict when birds might occur.

For the 1983 season (see Table 2), additional lighting and manning of the site resulted in a greater number of captures although weather conditions were not always favourable during migration times.

It was not until the 1984 season that both authors were able to fully co-ordinate their own efforts and those of the factory staff and were assisted most ably during late April and early May by Prof. K.M. Howell and C.A. Msuya to provide some encouraging results (see Table 3). Not only were more birds caught, but a greater number of species was also recorded in the factory catches, including Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni*, Striped Crake *Porzana marginalis* and Lesser Cuckoo *Cuculus poliocephalus*, all species new to the Mufindi checklist (Boswell and Beakbane in prep.).

Table 1. Numbers of Afrotropical migrants caught at Mufindi in 1982

Species	No.
Harlequin Quail <i>Coturnix delegourguei</i>	3
African Crake <i>Crex egregia</i>	2
Streaky-breasted Pygmy Crake <i>Sarothrura boehmi</i>	3
African Pitta <i>Pitta angolensis</i>	10

Table 2. Number of Afrotropical migrants caught at Mufindi in 1983

Species	No.
Harlequin Quail <i>Coturnix delegourguei</i>	9
African Crane <i>Crex egregia</i>	2
Lesser Moorhen <i>Gallinula angulata</i>	1
Streaky-breasted Pygmy Crane <i>Sarothrura boehmi</i>	1
Temminck's Courser <i>Cursorius temminckii</i>	1
Didric Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	1
African Pitta <i>Pitta angolensis</i>	5
Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	1

Table 3. Number of Afrotropical migrants caught at Mufindi in 1984

Species	No.
Little Bittern <i>Ixobrychus minutus payesii</i>	1
Harlequin Quail <i>Coturnix delegourguei</i>	37
African Crane <i>Crex egregia</i>	12
Lesser Moorhen <i>Gallinula angulata</i>	3
Allen's Gallinule <i>Porphyrio alleni</i>	11
Striped Crane <i>Porzana marginalis</i>	4
Streaky-breasted Pygmy Crane <i>Sarothrura boehmi</i>	5
Didric Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	1
Lesser Cuckoo <i>Cuculus poliocephalus rochii</i>	2
Pygmy Kingfisher <i>Ispidina picta natalensis</i>	3
African Pitta <i>Pitta angolensis</i>	40
Robin Chat <i>Cossypha caffra</i>	1
Orange Ground Thrush <i>Turdus gurneyi</i>	2

### CONCLUSIONS

Of the fifteen species recorded from the factory, seven are included in the East African Rare Bird List (East African Natural History Society 1982, East African Rare Bird List, *Scopus* (6) Supplement). With the exception of the Robin Chat *Cossypha caffra* and probably the Orange Ground Thrush *Turdus gurneyi* (both of which are likely to have been local birds), all the species caught are Afrotropical migrants. Most are generally uncommon, like the Lesser Cuckoo *Cuculus poliocephalus rochii* and the Striped Crane, *Porzana marginalis*. Little is known of the movements of these species and recent documentation in Tanzania is sparse. We have no daytime observations for any of these migrants and conclude that migration resumes at first light. Palaearctic migrants, however, are observed in good numbers around the factory and generally throughout the area after weather conditions have been suitable for a 'fall'. Palaearctic species include Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*, Red-backed Shrike *L. collurio*, Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*, Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*, Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*, Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*, Whitethroat *S. communis*, Blackcap *S. atricapilla* and Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*.

The most eventful night was 2-3 May 1984 when not only were 32 birds caught and ringed but many other species were glimpsed as they circled round and round above the factory lights. One species was identified by its call as an Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus* but other birds apparently equally large, could not be identified satisfactorily. It is hoped that the continuation of work at the Mufindi site will further clarify the little known movements of Afrotropical migrants across Africa.

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We would like to thank Prof. K.M. Howell and C.A. Msuya for assistance and encouragement during long nights at the site in late April and early May 1984 and Dr S.N. Stuart and N.E. Baker for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

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## RINGING AND MIGRATION AT NGULIA, TSAVO, AUTUMN 1984

G.C. Backhurst, M.G. Kelsey and D.J. Pearson

Twenty-five nights were spent at Ngulia Safari Lodge from 26 October to 22 December but suitable weather allowed catching to be attempted on only 18 of them. The total number of Palaearctic migrants ringed (3489) was low for the amount of netting effort expended but reflects the frequent lack of mist this year.

Tsavo West had some rain in mid October which led to green grass and bush in places at the time of the first visit from 26 to 28 of the month. Few migrants were seen, however, even when mist descended to 30 m from ground level for a few minutes on the night of 26th/27th.

The main period of cover was from 16 November to 3 December but good falls of birds occurred on only four nights (19th, 21st, 23rd and 29th - ringing totals 510, 450, 609 and 765 respectively). Marsh Warblers (scientific names given in Table 1) predominated while numbers of Sprossers and Whitethroats, and especially River Warblers, were well below average (see Table 1). A Great Snipe caught after midnight on 21st was new for Ngulia and an Icterine Warbler on 29th was only the third.

The five nights of cover from 18 to 22 December started with two birdless ones. Mist on 20th and 21st was thick but few birds were seen or caught, suggesting a slackening off of overhead movement and/or inadequate penetration of the mist by the lights. The final night, 22nd was misty throughout with a number of heavy showers. Nearly 300 migrants were caught including two exceptionally late Olive-tree Warblers, a Redstart (third ever) and a Lesser Moorhen *Gallinula angulata* (second).

Rather few ringing recoveries are reported these days so it was heartening to have notification of an adult Marsh Warbler, ringed at night on 23 November this season recovered on northward passage at Salalah in southern Oman on 7 May 1985.

Table 1 continued

Cuckoo *C. poliocephalus* 1, Scops Owl *Otus scops* 2, Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* 6, Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* 13, Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* 36, Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* 2, Savi's Warbler *Locustella luscinioides* 1, Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* 2, Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* 48, Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* 19 and Yellow Wag-tail *Motacilla flava* 3.

From December 1969 a total of 67 707 Palaearctic birds of 45 species has been ringed at Ngulia during southward migration.

TABLE 1

Numbers of Palaearctic night migrants ringed at Ngulia Safari Lodge between October and February in the years 1969-1985\*

Species	1984/5* total	%**	Total 1969 1985*
Great Snipe <i>Gallinago media</i>	1	-	1
Eurasian Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	12	63	292
Eurasian Roller <i>Coracias garrulus</i>	1	35	37
Eurasian Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	5	48	131
Rufous Bush Chat <i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i>	25	41	760
Iranian <i>Irania gutturalis</i>	30	30	1256
Sprosser <i>Luscinia luscinia</i>	410	39	13005
Nightingale <i>L. megarhynchos</i>	23	60	487
Rock Thrush <i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	9	108	109
Isabelline Wheatear <i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	3	53	71
Northern Wheatear <i>O. oenanthe</i>	4	52	96
Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	1	-	3
Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	3	-	29
Basra Reed Warbler <i>A. griseldis</i>	35	83	544
Marsh Warbler <i>A. palustris</i>	1837	103	23410
Sedge Warbler <i>A. schoenobaenus</i>	13	240	78
Reed Warbler <i>A. scirpaceus</i>	4	80	65
Icterine Warbler <i>Hippolais icterina</i>	1	-	3
Upcher's Warbler <i>H. languida</i>	3	14	272
Olive-tree Warbler <i>H. olivetorum</i>	24	103	305
Olivaceous Warbler <i>H. pallida</i>	8	30	331
River Warbler <i>Locustella fluviatilis</i>	70	35	2517
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	38	37	1271
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	21	58	462
Whitethroat <i>S. communis</i>	804	52	19452
Barred Warbler <i>S. nisoria</i>	20	51	497
Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>	30	59	643
Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	27	43	781
Red-tailed Shrike <i>L. isabellinus</i>	27	53	642
Hybrid <i>L. collurio</i> x <i>L. isabellinus</i>	1	-	9
Number of species	29		29
Total	3489		67559

\* 1984/85 season - no ringing in January or February 1985.

\*\* The autumn 1984 total expressed as a percentage of the mean of the years 1972/73 to 1983/84 for each species.

Totals of Palaearctic species ringed in previous autumn seasons but not in 1984/85 are as follows: Little Bittern *Ixobrychus m. minutus* 4, Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora* 1, Corncrake *Crex crex* 7, Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* 1, Eurasian Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* 2, Lesser

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*Scopus* 8: 128-130, January 1986

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- Candy, Mrs Mhorag, Kaimosi Tea Estate, Box 1 Kaimosi. The biology of the Great Blue Turaco *Corythaeola cristata* and Ross's Turaco *Musophaga rossae*.
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- Elliott, Dr Clive C.H. FAO/UNDP, Box 634 Arusha, Tanzania. a) Biology and management of quelea populations. b) see Luder, R (c).
- Emlen, Dr Stephen T., Division of Biological Science, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853, U.S.A. see Wrege, P.
- Etoori, Miss Dorothy, Uganda Institute of Ecology, Box 22 Lake Katwe, Uganda. The impact of fishing villages on the birds and other wildlife in Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park.
- \*Gichuki, Mrs Cecilia, Section of Ornithology, National Museums of Kenya, Box 40658 Nairobi. a) a study of some aspects of the ecology of Speke's Weaver *Ploceus spekei* in Nairobi. b) the diet of the Barn Owl *Tyto alba* in Nairobi.
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- \*Reyer, Dr Heinz-Ulrich, Max Planck Institut fuer Verhaltensphysiologie, D-8131 Seewiesen, West Germany. Ecology and social behaviour of Pied Kingfishers *Ceryle rudis* at Lake Naivasha and Kendu Bay, Lake Victoria.

Short, Dr Lester L., Chairman, Department of Ornithology, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 19th St., New York, NY 10024, U.S.A. (b-e, with Horne, J.F.M.). a) Systematics and zoogeography of Afrotropical birds, especially indigenous landbirds. b) Behaviour, ecology and systematics of African honeyguides, barbets and woodpeckers. c) English names of African birds. d) Preservation of Afrotropical forest avifaunas. e) Behaviour and ecology of threatened East African birds.

Stevenson, Terry, Lake Baringo Club, Box 47557 Nairobi. Birds of the Lake Baringo area.

Stuart, Dr Simon N., c/o International Council for Bird Preservation, 219c Huntingdon Rd., Cambridge CB3 0DL, U.K. with Jensen F.P. and Brogger-Jensen, S. Survey of the avifauna of several forests in the Uzungwa Mountains, Tanzania (Mwanikana, Magondera, Chita, Dadaga, Mufindi and Kigogo Forests).

Sumba, Sebastian, Uganda Institute of Ecology, Box 22 Lake Katwe, Uganda. Studies of the Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* in Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda.

Taylor, P. Barry, c/o St Austin's Academy, Box 25138 Nairobi  
a) EANHS East African Nest Record Scheme. b) Counts of wintering and passage Palaearctic migrants at Ferguson's Gulf, Lake Turkana.

Thompson, Jeremy, c/o Cavina School, Box 43090 Nairobi. a) Quelea movement patterns and ecology using mass marking with fluorescent particles (in association with the FAO/UNDP Regional Quelea Project) b) The introduction of lovebirds *Agapornis* spp. to Lake Naivasha and their subsequent effect on the area's agriculture and indigenous birdlife.

Turner, Don A., Box 48019 Nairobi. see Baker, N.E. (a).

Wrege, Dr Peter, Box 33 Nakuru. with Emlem, S.T. Social behaviour of White-fronted Bee-eaters *Merops bullockoides* at Lake Nakuru National Park.

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\* Field work completed in 1984

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Names, addresses and project details are presented above as accurately as the information available allowed. Will people please contact the compiler via the editorial address with corrections and additions for the list. It is hoped that the expansion of the information to include addresses will enhance contact between researchers and other subscribers.

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- [Compiled by Graeme Backhurst]

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All contributions, which will be acknowledged, should be sent to the Editor, G.C. Backhurst, Box 24702, Nairobi.

### **WORKS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE LISTED UNDER 'REFERENCES'**

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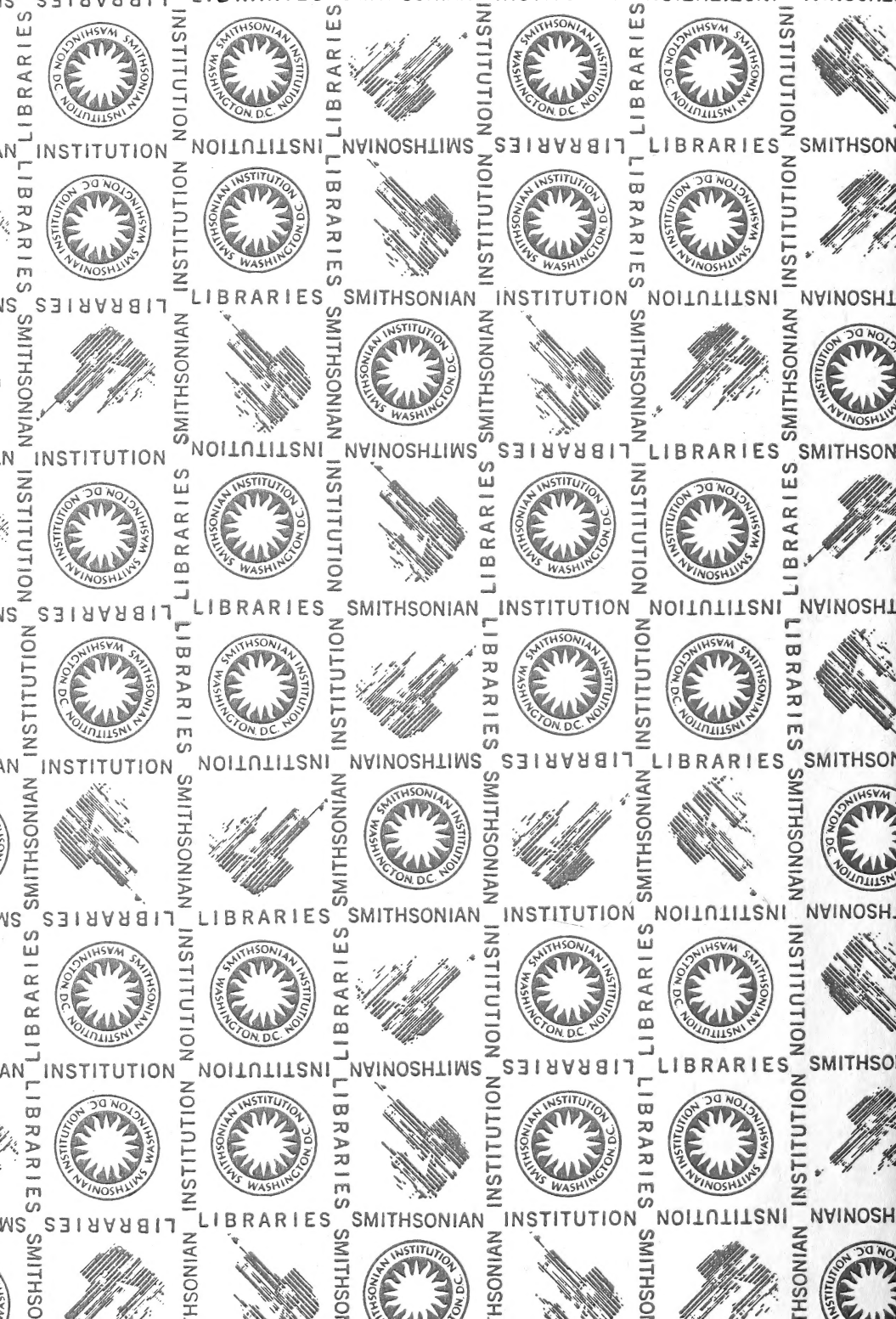
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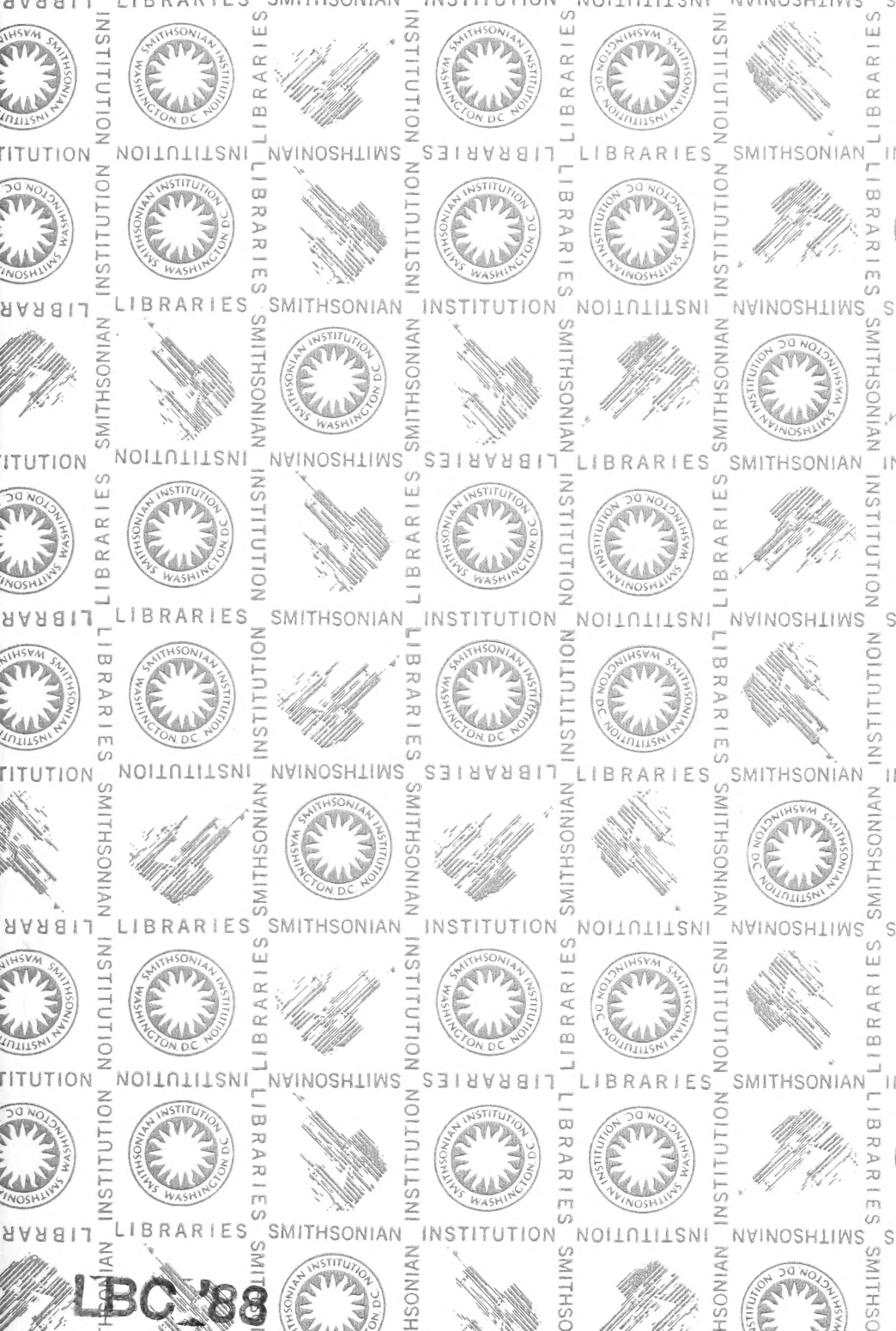
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